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SATURDAY, JUNE 19, 2004

American beheaded

**Report: Al-Qaida
group executes
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AP photos

Al-Arabiya television reported Friday that an al-Qaida group has beheaded Paul Johnson Jr., an American taken hostage Saturday in Saudi Arabia. Johnson, a Lockheed Martin employee, is shown at left in an undated family photo and above in a screen capture Tuesday from an Islamic militant Web site.

Senate votes to add 20,000 soldiers; final congressional OK now sought

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Immigrant truck deaths: A Houston judge wants to hold the lead prosecutor in contempt of court in the cases against alleged members of a human-smuggling ring authorities say are responsible for the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants after she says he violated a gag order.

District Judge Vanessa Gilmore ordered Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Rodriguez to appear in court Friday to show why he shouldn't be held in contempt.

Gilmore contends that Rodriguez violated the gag order by talking to The New York Times about the guilty plea entered in Gilmore's court Monday by Karla Patricia Chavez Joya, who is accused of leading the smuggling ring.

Impeachment trial: Gov. John G. Rowland's attorney stormed out of the Connecticut governor's impeachment hearings in Hartford, a day before the state Supreme Court hears landmark arguments over whether Rowland must testify before the legislative impeachment panel.

The high court was to hear arguments Friday, and justices indicated they may rule from the bench the same day.

If Connecticut orders Rowland to testify, he would become the first sitting chief executive in U.S. history forced to answer questions before a legislative body.



Family members of accused double murderer Scott Peterson from left: brother Joe, father Lee, sister-in-law Janey, and mother Jackie walk into the San Mateo County Superior Court in Redwood City, Calif., Thursday.

Peterson trial: Prosecutors tried to establish a monetary motive for Scott Peterson, on trial in California for murdering his pregnant wife Lisa Peterson, through testimony about valuable jewelry she inherited in the months before she disappeared.

Laci Peterson, with other family members, had inherited more than \$100,000 worth of jewelry from her grandmother before she vanished Dec. 24, 2002, witnesses have testified.

Gay marriage charges: The deputy mayor and a trustee of New Paltz, N.Y., presided over the marriages of four same-sex couples, emboldened by the dismissal of criminal charges against the mayor for performing gay and lesbian weddings.

Deputy Mayor Rebecca Rotzler and Trustee Julia Walsh officiated at the ceremonies Thursday night, a week after Mayor Jason West was cleared of 19 misdemeanor counts of solemnizing marriages without a license.



Porn rally: Rebekka Armstrong, HIV positive AIDS activist and former Playboy Bunny, speaks during a protest outside porn mogul Larry Flynt's office in Beverly Hills, Calif., on Thursday. AIDS activists rallied to persuade Flynt, who runs Hustler, to require condoms in his films.

War on terrorism

Security funding: The House rejected an effort by New York-area lawmakers early Friday to redirect security dollars to urban areas considered most at risk of terror attacks.

Following a debate that continued past midnight, the House voted 237-171 to defeat an amendment by Rep. John Sweeney, R-N.Y., that would have shifted money from a nationwide security program to one that focuses on cities considered the likeliest terrorist targets.

Pakistan al-Qaida hunt: Pakistani forces killed a renegade tribal leader allied with suspected al-Qaida militants in an overnight helicopter assault on a mud-brick fortress near the Afghan border, the army spokesman said Friday.

Nek Muhammad, a former Taliban fighter who led fierce resistance to the army's effort to flush out foreign militants from the rugged tribal belt, died with six others late Thursday at the home of another tribal chief.

World

Philippines election: Five weeks after the presidential election, lawmakers say they have nearly completed the official vote count, with incumbent Gloria Macapagal Arroyo holding a narrow lead and her administration warning the opposition against "adventurist plots."

By Friday, the congressional committee had tallied 132 of 176 regional polling summons — called certificates of canvass — showing Arroyo with 6,565,122 votes to Poe's 6,498,763.

Madrid bombing: The judge investigating the March terror attacks in Madrid on Friday released three Spaniards accused of helping supply the dynamite used in the bombings, court officials said.

Juan del Olmo released Sergio Alvarez, 23, the last detainee to appear for questioning in the bombings. He also released Antonio Toro and his sister, Carmen, who is the wife of Jose Emilio Suarez Trasancos, an ex-miner connected with the stolen explosives.

Photos and stories from wire reports

Business

Enron porn allegation: Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., says that a Web site operated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission contains links to pornographic e-mails written by Enron Corp. employees.

A FERC spokesman denied the Web site contained pornography, but acknowledged that some e-mails from Enron employees — linked to the site as part of a database on alleged electricity market manipulation by Enron — may contain pornographic language.

Clarifications

A photo of Ronald Reagan saluting on the June 7 cover was mistakenly flipped.

■ ■ ■
A story in Wednesday's edition about a 25th Infantry Division soldier accused

of murder in Iraq contained inaccurate information. Pfc. Edward Richmond is charged with unpremeditated murder in connection with the shooting of an Iraqi civilian during a patrol in al-Hawjah, Iraq, on Feb. 28.

Correction

A story in Saturday's edition about Lt. Gen. Paul V. Hester being nominated for assignment as Pacific Air Forces commander incorrectly identified his current command. Hester heads the Air Force Special Operations Command at Hurlburt Field, Fla.

One GI dead, 3 others hurt in Iraq attacks

Insurgents step up clashes in Buhruz

BY TAREK EL-TABLAUWY

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Insurgents launched two deadly attacks Friday in Baghdad, killing an American soldier and wounding a civilian contractor in a mortar barrage on a U.S. base, and injuring three U.S. troops in a coordinated ambush in another part of the capital.

The attacks were among several in Sunni Muslim areas of Iraq after a series of deadly car bombings this week that have unnerved an Iraqi public before the transfer of sovereignty at the end of this month.

Municipal officials said at least 13 Iraqis have died in two days of clashes between U.S. troops and insurgents in the town of Buhruz northeast of Baghdad.

Three Iraqi civilians died in the Baghdad ambush, which began when a roadside bomb exploded in the Kamalaya district in the east of the city, the U.S. command said. Insurgents opened fire from the rooftops. U.S. troops returned fire and the insurgents "sustained moderate casualties," the statement said.

Several hours later, six mortar shells exploded at a 1st Cavalry Division camp in southern Baghdad, killing an American soldier and slightly injuring a contractor working for KBR, the military said.

Elsewhere, American soldiers clashed with insurgents Friday for a second straight day in the Sunni town of Buhruz, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad.

Insurgents also attacked U.S. troops Friday at a police station in the Sunni Triangle city of Samarra, firing rocket-propelled grenades and rifles after warning shoppers to clear the area, officials said. U.S. troops returned fire, wounding two attackers, residents said by telephone. There was no report on U.S. casualties.

In the south, British soldiers traded small arms fire overnight with Shiite fighters loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr in Anwar, witnesses said. There were no British casualties, but two insurgents were killed.



Abdul Razak Abdullah's mother cries outside a Baghdad hospital as she realizes he's not in serious condition. The 32-year-old mother was injured Thursday in a car bomb blast in Baghdad.

A coalition spokesman said the smaller of two oil pipelines blasted by insurgents this week had nearly been repaired, although engineers were still examining the larger one.

Spokesman Dominic d'Angelo said tests could begin on the smaller pipeline Saturday but full exports would probably not resume before June 16. Iraqi exports were suspended Wednesday because of the attacks on the pipelines, which carry crude oil from the southern fields to tankers in the Gulf.

Exports from Iraq's other field near Kirkuk were halted last month due to sabotage on the pipeline to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, Turkey.

The attacks against the pipeline were part of a stepped up campaign of violence in the run-up to the June 30 transfer of sovereignty to the interim Iraqi government. The attacks appear aimed at undermining public confidence as the date approaches.

In the boldest attack in months, a car

bomber smashed into a crowd seeking jobs at a military recruitment center Thursday in Baghdad, killing at least 35 Iraqis and wounded another 145.

Another car bombing the same day killed six Iraqi civil defense fighters and injured four others in Balad, north of Baghdad.

The coalition's deputy operations chief told Associated Press Radio that Iraqis themselves must step forward and provide information on the insurgents if the Americans and their Iraqi and international partners are to halt the violence.

"The sooner we get every person in this country understanding their responsibility to provide us intelligence on those people in their neighborhoods who they believe to be participating in these attacks," the sooner they will stop, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said Friday. "We need to get that intelligence from them so we can pre-empt these attacks before they happen."

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, 831 U.S. servicemen have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq last year, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 612 died as a result of hostile action and 219 died of nonhostile causes.

The British military has reported 58 deaths; Italy, 18; Spain, eight; Bulgaria and Poland, six each; Ukraine, four; Slovakia three; Thailand, two; Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands have reported one each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 693 U.S. servicemen have died — 503 as a result of hostile action and 190 of nonhostile causes, according to the military.

The latest deaths reported by the U.S. military:

■ A Hungarian soldier was killed Thursday by a roadside bomb in a predominantly Shiite area south of Baghdad.

The latest identification reported by family members:

■ Army Maj. Paul Syversen III, 32, Arlington Heights, Ill., killed Wednesday in action; assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group, Fort Campbell, Ky.

He said U.S. forces were "working hard to try to develop the intelligence to find these people" responsible for the violence "so we can stop these attacks in the bud."

Residents said about 20 Iraqis were wounded in the Friday clashes, and that many townspeople had fled their homes to escape the fighting.

In other areas, clashes, insurgents wearing red scarves blessed by a U.S. patrol with machine gunfire and rocket-propelled grenades as the Americans tried to enter the market district.

"We are ready to defend our city against the invasion by the occupiers," one youthful fighter said, refusing to give his name.

Electricity was cut off in the city due to power lines damaged in the clashes.

Putin: Russia gave U.S. information on possible Iraqi attacks

BY BAGILA BUKHARBAEVA

The Associated Press

ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday his government warned Washington that Saddam Hussein's regime was preparing attacks in the United States and its interests abroad — an assertion that appears to bolster President Bush's contention that Iraq was a threat.

Putin emphasized that the intelligence didn't cause Russia to waver from its firm opposition to the U.S.-led war last year, but his statement was the second this month in which he has offered at least some support for Bush on Iraq.

"After Sept. 11, 2001, and before the start of the military operation in Iraq, the Russian special services ... received information

that officials from Saddam's regime were preparing terrorist attacks in the United States and outside it against the U.S. military and other interests," Putin said.

"Despite that information ... Russia's position on Iraq remains unchanged," he said in the Kazakh capital, Astana, after regional economic and security summits. He said Russia didn't have any information that Saddam's regime had actually been behind any terrorist acts.

"It's one thing to have information that Saddam's regime is preparing terrorist attacks, (but) we didn't have information that it was involved in any known terrorist attacks," he said.

Putin didn't elaborate on any details of the alleged plots or mention whether they were tied to al-Qaida. He said Bush had personally thanked one of the lead-

ers of Russia's intelligence agencies for the information but that he couldn't comment on how critical it was in the U.S. decision to invade Iraq.

In Washington, a U.S. official said Putin's information did not add to what the United States already knew about Saddam's intentions.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Putin's tip didn't give a time or place for a possible attack.

Bush alleged Thursday that Saddam had "numerous contacts" with al-Qaida and said Iraqi agents had met with the terrorist network's leader, Osama bin Laden, in Sudan.

Saddam "was a threat because he had terrorist connections — not only al-Qaida connections, but other connections to terrorist organizations," Bush said.

However, a commission investigating the Sept. 11 attacks reported this week that while there were contacts between al-Qaida and Iraq, they did not appear to have produced "a collaborative relationship."

Also Thursday, a top Russian diplomat called for international inspectors to resolve conclusively the question of whether Iraq had any weapons of mass destruction.

"This problem must be resolved ... because to a great extent it became the pretext for the start of the war against Iraq," the Interfax news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov as saying. He said such a finding would allow the U.N. Security Council to "finally close the dossier on Iraqi weapons."

In the wake of the invasion of Iraq, Putin sharply rebuked the United States for going to war despite opposition within the U.N.

Security Council and said the threat posed to international security by the war was greater than that posed by Saddam.

But Putin's relationship with Bush is warm by the accounts of both leaders, and last week he said he has no patience for those who criticize Bush on Iraq.

"I don't pay attention to such publications," Putin said of media criticism of Bush at the end of the G-8 summit in the U.S.-less news agency.

Putin said opponents who criticize Bush on Iraq "don't have any kind of moral right ... They conducted exactly the same kind of policy in Yugoslavia."

Russia vehemently opposed the NATO bombing attacks on Yugoslavia in 1999, which the United States pushed for under President Clinton.

Reports: Contractor has violence in his past

BY AARON BEARD

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A CIA contractor charged with fatally assaulting an Afghan detainee was once fired from a Connecticut police department and had a history of run-ins with wives and neighbors, authorities and acquaintances said.

The contractor, 38-year-old David A. Passaro of Lillington, was charged Thursday with two counts each of assault and assault with a dangerous weapon — a flashlight.

Passaro was charged in the June 21, 2003, death of Abdul Wali, who had gone to a U.S. base in Afghanistan on his own accord that month and surrendered to authorities. The officials suspected Wali of participating in rocket attacks against the base and wanted to talk to him. Three days later, Wali was dead.

Passaro was not charged with murder because no autopsy was performed to establish a cause of death, Justice Department officials said.

It was the first time civilian charges have been brought in the investigation of prisoner abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said the indictment sends a message that "the United States will not tolerate criminal acts of brutality" against detainees. Wali's case was initially referred to the Justice Department by the CIA in November.

Passaro was arrested at Fort Bragg. He was on leave from a civilian Army medical job there while doing the contract work for the CIA, according to the Army Special Operations Command.

Passaro's attorney, Gerald Beaver, said the arrest surprised him and Passaro because "it was my understanding that he would be allowed to surrender if there were any indictments."

If convicted, Passaro faces up to 40



WRAL-TV/AP

David A. Passaro, of Lillington, N.C., a former Army ranger hired by the CIA to conduct interrogations, was charged on Thursday with assaulting an Afghan detainee who died after two days of beatings.

years in prison and a \$1 million fine. He was ordered held without bond after an initial appearance before a federal magistrate in Raleigh and will have a detention hearing Tuesday.

Some people who know Passaro say he has a history of aggressive behavior, while others said the alleged actions seemed "very out of character."

A spokeswoman for the Hartford Police Department, Nancy Mulroy, said Passaro graduated from the city's police academy in 1990 but was relieved of duty after he was arrested by state police before completing his probationary period.

He was convicted in 1991 of breach of peace, state police said.

He paid a \$100 fine.

Passaro's ex-wife, Kerry Passaro of Fayetteville, said her husband had assaulted a neighbor.

"He was violent toward me throughout the marriage," she told North Carolina television stations.

North Carolina records show David and Kerry Passaro were divorced in 2001 and that Passaro remarried a year later. Since then, Harnett County deputy sheriffs had been called to the rural house twice to investigate domestic fights and again to look into a complaint that Passaro fired a gun at a neighbor's dog.

The chief of the Connecticut volunteer

fire department where Passaro served in 1990-91 said the acts described in the indictment are at odds with his memory of a dedicated young man who longed for a career in public safety.

"He was one of those 110 percent people," said Joseph Lorenzetti, 49. "Whatever you needed the young man to do, he was more than cooperative. ... From when I knew the gentleman, this seems very out of character."

A former Green Beret medic and Army ranger, Passaro began his contract with the CIA in December 2002. He arrived at the Afghan base in mid-May 2003, a few weeks before the alleged abuse occurred, U.S. officials said.

In the rural community north of Fort Bragg, some neighbors described Passaro as congenial, while others said he was hot-tempered.

"Any time we ever spoke, he seemed to be a really, really nice guy," said Diana Chrostowski. "I would have never thought that of him. To me, war is a dirty job. If he did do this, we just don't know what caused him to do this."

Other neighbors recalled heated run-ins. Theresa Smith, who lives across the dirt road from Passaro, said they had a falling out after her children and a neighbor's child rode a golf cart up and down the road and allegedly damaged Passaro's property. "He kept to himself, I kept to myself," Smith said. "If I needed help, I wouldn't have went over there, just because of his temperament."

Passaro's brother, Stephen Passaro, told WTNH-TV he loves his brother and does not believe the Afghanistan allegations.

"I don't even know that there really was anybody that allegedly was killed during an alleged interrogation," he said.

Associated Press writers Curt Anderson and Katherine Pilegar-Shelton in Washington, Estes Thompson in Raleigh and Matt Apuzzo in Hartford, Conn., contributed to this story.

Senate votes to add 20,000 more troops to Army

BY KEN GUGGENHEIM

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Defying the Bush administration, the Senate voted overwhelmingly Thursday to add 20,000 troops to an Army stretched thin by the war in Iraq and other commitments around the world.

The 93-4 vote in the Republican-led Senate — following a similar action by the House — reflected the anxieties lawmakers have been hearing from families of service personnel whose tours in Iraq keep getting extended and who were returning to civilian life is repeatedly postponed.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the lack of troops at the end of major combat in Iraq cost the military an opportunity to stop the violence that continues today.

"We didn't have enough people on the ground, and now we are paying a very, very heavy price for that incredible mistake on the part of the civilian leadership in the Pentagon of the United States of America," he said.

The increase was approved as an amendment to a \$447 billion defense authorization bill. Under the proposal by Sen. Jack Reed,

Decision goes against views of Bush administration

D.R.I., the size of the Army would increase by 4 percent, to 502,400. Congressional aides estimated the cost at \$1.7 billion.

Armed Services Committee Chairman John Warner, R-Va., supported the amendment after it

was modified to specify that the money would come from a \$25 billion fund within the bill for Iraq and Afghanistan operations or from a future emergency spending bill.

"The Army needs this active-duty strength. We are in agreement, I think, on this point," he said.

Army leaders oppose a permanent increase in troop strength, saying they can do the job with the current force once it is organized more efficiently.

The Army also had a higher cost estimate for the additional troops. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker told report-

ers this week it costs the Army \$2.6 billion a year to keep 10,000 soldiers trained and equipped, and the Army would struggle if given thousands of extra troops without the money to pay for them.

"We didn't have enough people on the ground, and now we are paying a very, very heavy price for that incredible mistake on the part of the civilian leadership in the Pentagon of the United States of America."

Sen. John McCain

R-Ariz.

"Congress can only fund us one year at a time," Schoomaker said Tuesday. "They can encumber us forever. We are very reluctant to be encumbered by more than is necessary."

Earlier this year, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld approved temporarily increasing in the Army's strength by 30,000 more than its congressionally authorized size of 482,400. Army of-

ficials have said that was necessary only so the Army could fight in Iraq and Afghanistan and reorganize at the same time.

As originally drafted, the Senate bill would have given the Army the flexibility to add 30,000 troops.

Americans would not have required it to do so. The House version of the defense bill, approved last month, would add 30,000 Army soldiers and 9,000 Marines over three years.

The White House criticized the House provisions. "A mandatory increase would lack flexibility and could leave troop levels higher than needed," especially after several (Defense Department) initiatives to reduce demand on the force have had time to work," it said in a statement. Voting against the Reed amendment were Republicans Gordon Smith of Oregon, Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania,

Larry Craig of Idaho and Craig Thomas of Wyoming. Not voting were Sens. John Kerry, D-Mass., and Republicans Robert Bennett of Utah and James Inhofe of Oklahoma.

On another amendment, Senate Republicans defeated a proposal by Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., to roll back some of the President Bush's tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans to help pay for the Iraq war.

A similar proposal by Biden was also rejected last year. The 53-44 vote was largely along party lines.

Biden said, "The idea that if we ask the wealthiest Americans among us to contribute to the war effort, the idea that they are unwilling to do that is preposterous."

But Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, said Biden's bill would hurt small businesses. "It's a tax increase during an economic recovery," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist said he hopes the overall bill will be ready for final approval Tuesday. The House and Senate language will have to be reconciled before the bill is sent to Bush.

MIDEAST NOTEBOOK

Jessica Inigo and Charlie Coon

Karbala weapon buyback a little too popular

Iraqis have more to sell than program can buy

The weapon's buyback program is so popular in Karbala, Iraq, that troops continuously run out of money.

In fact, Iraqis lined the streets Wednesday with hundreds, if not thousands, of munitions and weapons, waiting to get some cash. Unfortunately, the 66th Military Police Company out of Fort Lewis, Wash., ran out of money the day before. When Iraqis got word that there would be no buyback that day, they simply packed up their belongings as if they were books, instead of missiles, and went home.

Though it is illegal for Iraqis to have weapons, MPs are stuck in a Catch-22. They can't arrest or confiscate weapons when there is no money because things could become dangerous. Under the program, civilians who bring back weapons will not be in trouble or asked questions. Some of the Iraqis that stuck around Wednesday got to turn their loot over for a receipt that would entitle them to some cash later. The money came in Wednesday evening, totaling \$200,000. Army officials estimate that sum should last through Thursday.

Troops living in the camps around

Karbala said they use to get mortared almost every day before the buyback. Now, the people of Karbala are saving their rockets for a little dough.

All that dip, no chips

On Camp Lima, the Post Exchange might just be trying to drive some troops crazy. It sells French onion dip, bean dip, cheese dip and salsa, but there are no chips. It sells three different types of cereals, but no bowls or milk. There are different canned meats, jellies and sandwich spreads, but no bread. And the kicker? They sell phone cards, but there are no phones on the camp that accept the cards.

Camp officials say some products simply sell faster than others, leaving odd pieces to what would be a great snack.

Better than NBA, kind of

The last man to start ahead of NBA star David Robinson might be Cmdr. Cliff Maurer, commander of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74 of Gulfport, Miss., which is deployed to Camp Fallujah in Iraq.

Robinson had a stellar career at Navy, where he was two-time All American, and later with the NBA's San Antonio Spurs, where he was a league MVP and 10-time all-star before retiring last year.

But before all that, Maurer was a senior on the Navy men's basketball team during the 1983-84 season when he started at center ahead of Robinson, who was a freshman.

"David's skills were raw," said Maurer, of Orefield, Pa., adding that Robinson's passion as a youth was for baseball. "His sixth sense of the basketball court wasn't really there yet. But every day he came to practice, he was better than the day before."

Maurer, who stands "a little over" 6-10, said he used to see Robinson at Navy alumni games in Annapolis, Md., but said the two haven't seen each other in years.

Maurer proudly noted that while Robinson went on to become a college basketball superstar, the Midshipmen were no slouches without him. They went 18-11 in Maurer's junior year and 24-8 when Maurer was a senior, and Robinson was a still-green freshman averaging 7 points per game.



CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Cmdr. Cliff Maurer, commander of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74, was the starting center on the 1983-84 Navy men's basketball team ahead of future star David Robinson.

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Stars and Stripes reporter Terry Boyd speaks with Servicemembers from Triple Deuce at Firebase Purgatory.

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From left to right, Sgt. Wesley Parkhurst, Spc. Robert Isaacs, Terry Boyd, and Pfc. Michael Greenwood.

Stars strike fear in Camp Kalsu GIs

BY RICK SAVETTA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP KALSU, Iraq — It's hard to sleep in a tent that has shrapnel holes in its canvas, especially when you know your buddy died just tonight, one soldier recently said.

The comment by Cpl. Phillip Haworth, 25, of Fresno, Calif., at a remote camp south of Baghdad, echoes many living on bases throughout Iraq.

"You're up listening. You hear a door slam and people are running for bunkers," Haworth said. "Nobody's afraid until someone lays right in front of you and dies."

Insurgents lob mortar rounds and launch rockets at U.S. camps throughout Iraq almost daily. It can happen at any time at any camp. Wednesday, a rocket hit the PX at Balad, killing three troops. Even the coalition's headquarters in Baghdad, known as the Green Zone, comes under frequent attack.

When Camp Kalsu was struck with more than 40 mortar rounds in five attacks last month, it was business as usual.

But on the afternoon of May 25, hell rained down. Three insurgents fired nearly a dozen explosive shells on the soldiers' living quarters.

Spc. Daniel Unger, 19, a preacher's son from Exeter, Calif., died a few feet from

the bunker he was running toward, Haworth said.

That day, Unger was supervising Iraqi workers on base. When the first round struck, he shuffled the local laborers to safety first, his buddies said. The third round landed about 10 yards from where Unger fell, they said. A chunk of metal ripped through his torso.

Lying on the ground, Unger cried out. Staff Sgt. Nathan Hays and Staff Sgt. John Bustillos ran to him while rounds continued to explode around them. Unger lay in his belly with blood pooling near his arm pits, as his face went pale white, Hays said.

They knew there was little they could do to save their soldier. Still, they checked out his wounds and tried to comfort Unger.

"All he said was 'Help me,'" Hays said. "He knew his buddies were with him. He died with people who loved him."

Two Vermont National Guardsmen, Spc. Alan N. Bean Jr. and Sgt. Kevin F. Sheehan, also died in the attack. They were escorting a team of interrogators to the base and were killed when a round exploded near the entrance to a bunker, said Lt. Col. Randall Twitwell, commander of the 95th Military Police Battalion. Four other Vermont troops were seriously wounded, he said.

"It makes you realize your mortality," Hays said. "That's going through every one's minds."

The camp, named for football star Bob Kalsu, who was killed in Vietnam, is surrounded by farmland and small villages.

Unger's unit, the 1st Battalion, 185th Armor Regiment, a National Guard unit

Friends remember dedicated infantryman

Spc. Daniel Unger's friends described the infantryman as a good kid from a small town in Northern California who never swore and carried a stack of Bibles with him.

On his chest, Unger had the word infantry tattooed above crossed rifles, said Cpl. Phillip Haworth.

Unger, who was killed May 25 in a mortar attack, turned down a college baseball scholarship to serve in the infantry. He joined the Army National Guard at age 17, while still in high school. After one weekend drill with his

unit, they were mobilized for Iraq, Haworth said.

"All he wanted to be was infantry, to come here and to fight," Haworth said. He was always trying to make people laugh, his friends said. They play a video of Unger goofing around in the Kuwaiti desert with an inflated latex glove over his head. They also have footage of him in pursuit of Iraqi insurgents and firing his machine gun.

"I don't want to watch it anymore," Haworth said. "We're just waiting for the next attack."

— Rick Savetta



Hays

from San Bernardino, Calif., became a provisional infantry unit in Iraq. Their job is to protect the tiny base that military police and cavalry use to stage patrols on nearby supply routes.

Ever since the attack, the troops don't feel safe on the base, they said. They would rather be outside the wire on patrol, where at least they can fight back.

"Out there you have a chance. In here, there's nothing you can do but wait for your ticket," Haworth said.

It's not just the troops being targeted. Locals who work on base have been murdered, soldiers said. They talk about the "water truck guy" who did not show up for work recently. Fellow Iraqis said he was executed for working with Americans, sol-

diers said.

After the attack, the Army dispatched a fire-finding radar to the camp to pinpoint where a mortar round was launched from, and thus, locate the insurgents' position. So far, troops have had no luck tracking down those responsible for the attacks.

"There's a feeling among the guys — we want to find them," said Sgt. Dan McNasby. "We're pretty torn up."

The enemy has attacked recently with rockets, which the men say are less accurate. Meanwhile, catching those responsible for their friend's death is not easy, Haworth said.

"You're chasing a ghost."

E-mail Rick Savetta at: savetta@mail.strips.osd.mil

Stars stuff care packages for troops

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Fort Myer is normally the solemn and sober home of the Army's 3rd U.S. Infantry, the "Old Guard" responsible for ceremonial duties at Arlington National Cemetery.

But the historic Army post traded that sedate image for merrymaking Thursday, as teams of shouting, singing, cheering servicemembers from all five military branches raced frantically to stuff 3,000 care packages destined for their counterparts in Iraq.

The teams were joined by country music star Lee Greenwood, best known for his hit "God Bless the USA," and former World Wrestling Entertainment champion Mick Foley.

The first annual "Joint Services Ultimate Stuffing Challenge" was sponsored by the USO as part of the organization's "Operation Care Package," a project to collect donations from individuals and corporations and buy comfort items for deployed troops.

Stuffing parties have been held all over the country, and the USO has shipped over 300,000 care packages to date, according to Elaine Rogers, president of the USO of Metropolitan Washington.

Thursday's stuffing party also served as the Washington launch of a new "Patriotic Country" album released this week by recording label BMG.

The CD is a compilation of music from 10 country music stars, including The Charlie Daniels Band, Randy Travis, Don Williams, Alaska and Martina McBride. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the CD will be donated to the USO.

The CD also includes a new arrangement of "God Bless the USA," which Greenwood said he wrote while traveling in his private bus during a career tour in the early 1980s.

Since 1983, "God Bless the USA" has been like a roller-coaster — it goes up and down in its popularity, depending on whether America is engaged in a war at the time, Greenwood said in a Tuesday telephone interview with Stars and Stripes from New York City.

Greenwood didn't sing his anthem Thursday, but he did pitch in and help the Coast Guard team during the stuffing contest.

The Patriotic Country CD was included in each care package assembled Thursday.

The most coveted items include a 10-minute international telephone calling card; a disposable camera; a desert-camouflage patterned t-shirt; and a high-tech bandana designed to be soaked in cold water and wrapped around the neck.

Bandanas are especially useful for wearing under body armor in Iraq's blistering summer heat, Rogers said.

But Thursday's most sought-after prize was Foley, who in between stints helping the Army team stuff bags, was mobbed by



LISA BURGESS/Stars and Stripes

Mick Foley, three-time World Wrestling Entertainment champion, works the care-package assembly line at Fort Myer, Va., on Thursday.

servicemembers seeking autographs and snapping photos.

Admitting that he has heard the phrase "I'm a big fan" more than a few times, the wrestler, whose career stage names have included "Mankind," "Cactus Jack" and "Dude Foley," said he doesn't mind the repetition at all.

In fact, Foley said, he finds it reassuring.

"It reminds me that I don't have to go out and find a real job," Foley said.

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgess@starsandstripes.osd.mil

Messages of Support



Thank you to all our troops protecting our country and the world, we love you!! Those who protest this war wouldn't even have that right if our soldiers didn't fight for them, they should be grateful. Thank you, all of our Armed Forces are doing AWESOME!!!!!! — R. Chalou



Messages of Support

Joey, Thank you for all you do and all the others over there too!! Everyone at home is praying for your safe return and watching the news constantly hoping to catch a glimpse of you or your unit. I miss you and I can't wait for you to come home. Please stay strong, I know you will. You have so many people here in Kentucky supporting you. I can't wait to see you again. Come home soon. Love, Jill



JUST A NOTE TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I GREATLY APPRECIATE ALL YOU ARE DOING FOR ME AND MY COUNTRY, SO THAT WE ARE FREE. KEEP SAFE AND POSITIVE AND KNOW THAT MY PRAYERS AND THOUGHTS ARE WITH ALL OF YOU DAILY. MARY/HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY



To the Hero's of the United States Armed Forces: Everywhere I go lately I'm seeing more and more flags flying and yellow ribbons reminding us to pray for you all... please know that you are being supported — in fact the Red Cross has asked people to hold up on the care packages because they can't send them fast enough!! You will NOT be forgotten — and remember that GOD WILL NOT LEAVE YOU no matter what Prayers for a job well done and a speedy return! P. Freeman. Hudsonville Michigan

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

DOD: SBP reform on shaky ground

Defense officials, in a late-hour attempt to persuade senators not to join the House in voting to raise military survivor benefits, said the case for doing so has been built on a series of "mistaken assertions."

They also cautioned senators about the cost of enhancing the Survivor Benefit Plan — \$5 billion in defense spending over 10 years and a \$20 billion increase in unfunded liabilities for the military retirement fund.

They warned that the "open season" planned for nonenrolled retirees, if benefits are improved, could cause resentment among current SBP participants because the late enrollment penalty would be modest, no more than an extra 4.5 percent added to the current 6.5 percent premium.

Lee Lange, a survivor benefit expert with Military Officers Association of America, said he disagreed with many of the arguments being made to the Senate Armed Services Committee as a floor vote neared.

MOAA, the Fleet Reserve Association and other service groups who advocate phasing out of the sharp drop in SBP payments that occurs at age

62 had pressed for support from Congress arguing three major points:

■ SBP participants from the 1970s to early 1980s were not properly briefed on the age-62 reduction when they enrolled. Benefits fall from 55 percent of covered retired pay down to as low as 35 percent.

■ All participants are now saddled with a larger share of SBP costs than Congress intended when the program began in 1972.

■ Military SBP is inequitable compared to federal civilian survivor benefits, which don't decline in old age.

Defense officials challenged each of these claims in papers provided to the armed services committee in recent weeks. Dr. David Chu, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, reinforced the department arguments in a letter to committee leaders, sources said.

The DOD effort is aimed at blocking an amendment to the 2005 defense authorization bill (S.2400) from Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., that would phase out the age-62 offset by April 2008. The House, in its defense bill, already has approved a nearly identical amendment.

"The underpinnings of that [Landrieu] amendment," said Defense of-

ficials in a point paper, "rest on a number of mistaken assertions."

Taking aim at the claim that SBP enrollees were not briefed on the benefit drop at 62, Defense officials compiled an inch-thick copy of brochures, handouts and other informational materials dating back to 1972.

"The original DOD Pamphlet used to inform members of this program ... clearly laid out the potential impact of the age 62 reduction due to Social Security," officials said.

But Lange said service associations have heard from hundreds of retirees and survivors who say they weren't briefed on the offset.

"Either they have all forgotten ... or there may be some truth to that," said Lange. "I don't think all these people are making that up."

A Senate source said the DOD arguments are persuasive. SBP, he said, is a "system of contracts" that Landrieu's amendment proposes to break.

Whether any senator will argue the DOD "facts" in a floor debate, and risk the wrath of tens of thousands of military widows, he could not say.

Comments are welcomed. Write to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA 20129-1111, e-mail milupdate@doe.com or visit: www.militaryupdate.com

Gen. Myers shares Father's Day honor

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — CJCS knows best.

In addition to being Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, this year Gen. Richard Myers shares with four others the title of "2004 Fathers of the Year," as named by the National Father's Day Committee.

Myers was one of roughly



Myers

20 men up for the distinction. "As I see it, a father has to do his best to help raise children who will be good citizens, good leaders and good parents in their own right," said Myers, father to three grown children and who as two grandchildren. "He also has a responsibility to make the world a better place for his children and grandchildren. It's a tremendous privilege and responsibility, so being recognized as 'Father of the Year' is truly a

great honor."

The other top fathers this year are Ellis Marsalis Jr., musician and patriarch of the Marsalis musical family; NASCAR driver Richard Petty, NBA star Isiah Thomas, and baseball Hall of Famer Tommy Lasorda.

The five were to be honored Thursday at the 63rd annual awards luncheon in New York City.

"The criteria is that they have to be active in the community and recommended by either a family member, friend, committee member or past honoree," said committee office associate Joan Reeves.

Myers was nominated by a committee member whose brother serves in the U.S. military, she said.

The 17-member National Father's Day Committee is a not-for-profit, noncommercial organization that strives to heighten the meaning and observance of Father's Day, raise funds for philanthropic purposes and present "Father of the Year" Awards to deserving fathers of high accomplishment in their chosen fields who have also exhibited enormous achievement as parents, according to a news release.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@stripes.osd.mil



Find Your Way Home

Relocation Guide
Saturdays

STARS AND STRIPES
Your Hometown Newspaper

GI gets jail for sex with girlfriend's child

Soldier sentenced to 45 months in prison, reduced to lowest rank, dishonorable discharge

BY STEVE LIEWER

Stars and Stripes

WÜRZBURG, Germany — A married soldier who was carrying on an affair with another soldier in his unit was sentenced Tuesday to 45 months in prison for having sex with the women's 13-year-old daughter.

Pfc. Frederick W. Lopez, 23, of Company A of the 17th Signal Battalion, pleaded guilty to charges of carnal knowledge and sodomy with a minor, said Capt. Sean Condon, acting chief of criminal law for the 1st Infantry Division's

Staff Judge Advocate. He also was reduced to the lowest enlisted rank and will be dishonorably discharged.

Court documents reveal an odd relationship between Lopez's family and that of his girlfriend, a married E-4 who served in his unit. Her name is not being revealed to protect her daughter's identity.

The two families lived near each other in the Marshall Heights housing complex in Kitzingen and had been friends since each arrived there two years ago, according to a statement of facts

signed by Lopez, his attorney and the prosecutor. Lopez and his wife have two small children; the female soldier — whose husband lives in the United States — has four children, ages 8 to 13.

Late last year, Lopez and his wife decided she and the children would leave their apartment and move back to the house while he stayed in Germany to finish his tour. After the Lopez family had shipped their household goods, the woman agreed to let the family move into her apartment so they could save on hotel bills.

Lopez and the woman began a

sexual relationship about a week after his family left on Jan. 31, according to the woman's sworn statement to Army investigators. The girl told police that her relationship with Lopez evolved from a shared interest in Magic cards to sex. He gave her his high-school class ring.

The girl told police the two had sex about 10 times, usually when her mother was on duty and they were caring for the other children. They also used his empty apartment.

The girl said Lopez asked her mother for permission to have

sex with her, but the mother said no. The woman told police she did not suspect they were involved although she had seen them flirting — even though one morning she learned he had slept in her daughter's room the previous night.

On March 1, the girl eventually told a neighbor.

After hearing Lopez's plea, the military judge, Col. Stephanie Browne, recommended a prison term of 78 months. It was reduced to 45 months because of a plea agreement between Lopez and prosecutors, Condon said.

E-mail Steve Liewer at: liewers@mail.stripes.osd.mil

Aviano welcomes new wing command

BY KENT HARRIS

Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Brig. Gen. Mike Worden gave up command of the 31st Fighter Wing to Brig. Gen. Philip Breedlove at a change of command ceremony Friday.

Worden is headed to the Pentagon to serve as director for operational plans and joint matters and deputy chief of staff for Air and Space Operations for the Air Force.

Lt. Gen. Glen Moorhead, the commander of the 16th Air Force, joked that the Air Force searches hard to find leaders that can lead airmen in the field, then ships them away.

"When the time is exactly right, we bury them up to their necks in paperwork at the Pentagon," he said.

Not that Breedlove — who comes to Aviano after a two-year stint as commander of the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. — won't have any papers to shuffle himself.

But Moorhead, whose headquarters is also at Aviano, said Breedlove brings necessary skills to the job. He's a command pilot with more than 3,200 flying hours, mostly on the F-16.



KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Gen. Glen Moorhead III, the 16th Air Force commander, hands the colors of the 31st Fighter Wing to Brig. Gen. Philip Breedlove during the change-of-command ceremony Friday at Aviano Air Base, Italy. Breedlove assumes command of more than 4,000 active-duty personnel at the largest Air Force base in the Mediterranean.

At Luke, he was used to a lot of construction and cleanup — the base was the first Air Force facility to be removed from the Superfund list during his tenure. Aviano's the site of one of the largest ongoing military construction projects in the world.

"He is certainly not new to the construction that's going on outside the hangar," Moorhead said. And, as commander of a base (Luke) that turns out hundreds of fighter pilots and crew chiefs each year, Breedlove has already worked with dozens of airmen assigned to Aviano.

"I do understand your sacrifices and on behalf of an unknowing America, I thank you for who you are and what you do," he told the airmen assembled.

Worden said he was proud of the time he spent at Aviano, pointing out that more than 40 percent of the wing had been deployed downrange at various points. More than 14,000 Army personnel came through the base on their way to Southwest Asia. And the base has picked up a handful of Air Force and DOD awards for various areas of excellence.

Worden and his wife Laurie have three daughters. Breedlove and his wife, Cindy, also have three children.

"The Air Force can take Laurie and I from Aviano," Worden said.

"But they can never take Aviano from out of us."

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Change of command

Cmdr. Caroline Olinger relieved Cmdr. Donna Vaught as commanding officer of Personnel Support Activity-Europe during a Thursday morning ceremony in Naples, Italy.

PSA-Europe manages 12 detachments in eight countries, which are responsible for all pay



Olinger

and personnel issues for military personnel and all official travel for military members and Defense Department. Civil

ians. Olinger reports to Naples from San Diego, where she was the officer-in-charge of the naval station's personnel support detachment.

Vaught will become deputy director of the Washington, D.C., Field Support Activity.

From staff reports

Recent medical graduates respond to demand in Iraq

New doctors postpone residency for deployment

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

Lt. Admyel Rosario-Oritz has a secret.

She's likely going to war this summer or fall, and hasn't had the strength or the nerve to tell her father, said the 26-year-old Navy doctor who graduated with a group Friday from their first year of internship following medical school at the Bethesda National Naval Medical Center.

Rosario-Oritz and about 75 percent of the other 55 Navy medical graduates likely will head overseas to operating units instead of the normal residency path most new doctors take.

"This is a huge number," said hospital spokeswoman Corey Schultz. "Normally they go to residencies, or other hospitals as general medical officers, to get a little more on-the-job training. But this class will be going straight to war, so to speak; practicing medicine on the ground in Iraq, in the line of fire, with Marine units."

They won't deploy in lieu of completing their residencies; they're just postponing the typical next step to respond to medical needs of the Navy and Marine Corps. The Marine Corps does not have its own medical staff, and instead employs Navy doctors, corpsman and nurses in their units.

It's neither unusual nor problematic that the doctors are deploying to practice medicine in the field before embarking on residencies, said Dr. Emmanuel Cassinatti, former chief of Medical Education for the Army and now associate dean for Clinical Affairs at the School of Medicine, Uniform Services University of Health Sciences.

"Historically, there is always a certain percentage who are assigned to service in the field, and the feeling from the services these people are able to practice

medicine as general medical officers," Cassinatti said.

"For all of us, the training we get (in med school) is more than adequate," said Lt. David You, 26, an internal medicine intern who will be heading to Okinawa first, and doesn't know yet if he's bound for a combat zone. "Our internships are unique and very broad-based."

The internships include rotations in orthopedics, psychology, pediatrics, and obstetrics and gynecology, to name some examples.

"And when we're out in the fleet, it's not like we are going to be out there by ourselves," added Lt. Leander Cannick, 27. "We'll be able to consult with specialists and have board-certified (doctors) and all those available to us."

Joining the military medical profession obviously meant the possibility of going to war, said Lt. Jared Bogler, 30. "Most of us joined the military to ... serve the country, and there's a much greater sense of serving when you're serving with the troops in the field."

The exposure of practicing medicine in the field can only make them better doctors, said Lt. Farzad Nowrouzadeh, 29, an internal medicine intern who will be heading to Camp Lejeune, N.C., this summer before shipping to Iraq.

None of the doctors have received deployment orders yet, they said, and don't know when they might be heading to a combat zone.

"This is a very anxious time for anyone, to see young soldiers get wounded and come back to a battalion aid station hurt. But in those times ... you rely on training and what has been taught to us here," Nowrouzadeh said. "But you're always anxious and nervous about going to hot zone, a hot theater."

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@stripes.osd.mil



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Armored van leaving Gaeta robbed of \$100,000

Check-writers warned to monitor bank accounts for suspicious activity

BY JASON CHUDY

Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Italian carabinieri are investigating the off-base robbery of a Navy-constructed armored van Tuesday afternoon.

About \$100,000 worth of checks, credit card slips, euro, dollars and other monetary items were taken from the Investigator Guard-Transport Inc. van, said Naples base public affairs officer Lt. Cmdr. Lisa Braun.

The van was on its way from Naval Support Activity Gaeta to

the Naples Carney Park golf course when the robbery occurred, she said. There are conflicting reports as to where the van was actually robbed.

Carabinieri from the Pozzuoli office responded to the 1 p.m. robbery and are investigating.

The company's vans make frequent runs for the Naples and Gaeta Navy Exchanges, commissary and Morale, Welfare and Recreation departments, according to Naples commander Capt. Dave Frederick in his weekly Panorama newspaper column.

Officials from Investigator

Guard-Transport Inc. did not respond to queries on Friday.

Braun said that some of the stolen items may have had credit card or Social Security numbers on them.

"We want people to be careful and monitor their bank and credit accounts to make sure there is no suspicious activity," she said. Braun said people who suspect that their information has been used fraudulently should call their banks.

Since Tuesday's robbery, Navy officials have identified whose checks were stolen. MWR has al-

ready contacted those check-writers and the Navy Exchange and commissary have contacted, or will be contacting, affected patrons.

Exchange and commissary officials would like anyone who wrote checks on certain specific days and locations to call them.

Those writing checks at the Grignano commissary between June 9-13 should contact Arthur Lehman at DSN 625-3895, commercial 081-724-3895, or Robert Colella at DSN 625-3896, commercial 081-724-3895.

Those writing checks June

13-14 at the Grignano or Capodichino Navy Exchange mini-marts should contact Tia Millardo at DSN 625-4927, commercial 081-724-4927.

The Navy Federal Credit Union has agreed not to charge a stop-check fee for those with affected checks, said Braun.

Braun also recommended individuals who may have had their checks stolen, or personal information compromised, visit the Federal Trade Commission's ID theft web site at:

www.consumer.gov/idtheft.

E-mail Jason Chudy at: chudyj@mail.esrpes.osd.mil



Daddy's home

Above: Tech. Sgt. Michael Kiley, 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron, greets his wife, Tracey, and daughter, Kristen, after returning from Iraq on Thursday.

Right: Kiley gets reacquainted with daughter Kristen.



JOSHUA E. COLEMAN
Courtesy of U.S. Air Force

Clinic taking bite out of childhood obesity

Kaiserslautern-area families taught health habits

BY MARNI MCENTEE

Stars and Stripes

LANDSTUHL, Germany — Doctors, school nurses, dietitians and after-school counselors are nibbling away at the obesity problem among Kaiserslautern area kids.

On July 13, the second session begins of a weight-management clinic called the Pediatric Health Intervention Team, said Maj. Bruce Hess, a Landstuhl Regional Medical Center pediatrician. The first six-week program began in February.

Eight to 10 families with overweight children will attend the second clinic, which was expanded to eight weeks, to teach families how to maintain a healthy diet, develop regular exercise habits, lose weight and keep it off, Hess said.

"Kids are getting bigger, younger," Hess said. "Kids know it. Their parents know it. Sometimes they just need additional information like this so it sinks in."

The program is designed to fight a growing health problem among young Americans. A recent study by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that 15 percent of school-age children in the United States are seriously overweight. That's nearly 9 million youths, or three times as many as in 1980.

The problem among Department of Defense Dependents Schools kids in the Kaiserslautern area generally mirrors that of stateside children.

Clinic members and nurses at five of the 10 area DODDS schools took the heights and weights of 1,900 children. Of those surveyed, 17.3 percent were borderline obese and another 13.4 percent were considered obese, according to Lt. Col. Joice Carter, a clinical dietitian at the hospital.

Whether a person has a healthy weight is determined by measuring weight in relation to height, which generates a number called the Body Mass Index. The BMI standard for children varies based on age, Hess said.

Childhood obesity can set off a number of other adverse health conditions, such as Type II diabetes, hypertension, low self-esteem and depression, he said.

Hess said the weight management program will be expanded. For example, children at all 10 of the Kaiserslautern area schools will be surveyed in the upcoming year. They initially weren't surveyed because there wasn't enough staff to collect all the data, he said.

In addition, the second clinic will be broken into age groups: 5-8, 9-13 and 14-18.

And the clinic will add one-on-one coaching for kids to make sure they do their "homework" of exercising and eating right.

Hess said the first clinic had some success stories among the 10 kids who participated. Kids lost between three and 17 pounds and became less resistant to regular exercise. One motivator of the program was having kids fit into clothes that they couldn't wear before the clinic. Each also received a pedometer to measure their walking mileage.

Whether the lessons endure is another question.

Hess and Carter said the long months of summer when kids visit relatives who don't cook similar menus, and lack of an eating routine will make it tough.

Staff Sgt. Sheryl Donley said her 13-year-old stepdaughter Chelsea, who was seriously overweight, lost a few pounds. But Donley worries that the momentum she gained during the clinic won't hold up during the summer, when Chelsea moves in with her biological mother in the United States.

"It's just hard to keep her going in the right direction. It's going to be a real challenge," Donley said.

E-mail Marni McEntee at: mcentee@mail.esrpes.osd.mil



Carter

IN THE WORLD

Al-Qaida says it beheaded American hostage

U.S. official confirms death of Paul Johnson

BY SALAH NASRAWI

The Associated Press

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — An al-Qaida group said Friday it killed American hostage Paul M. Johnson Jr., posting three photos on the Internet showing his body and severed head.

The message, in the name of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, appeared as a 72-hour deadline set by the group ended.

Saudi security officials later said Johnson's body was found at al-Munayyah just outside the capital, Riyadh. Police cordoned off the area, said the officials, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In Washington, a U.S. official

confirmed that Johnson had been beheaded. At the top of the list of suspects is Abdulaziz Issa Abdul-Mohsin al-Mogrin, the top al-Qaida figure in Saudi Arabia, said the official, also speaking on condition of anonymity.

"In answer to what we promised ... to kill the hostage Paul Marshall (Johnson) after the period is over ... the infidel got his fair treatment," the al-Qaida statement said.

"Let him taste something of what Muslims have long tasted from Apache helicopter fire and missiles," the statement said.

Johnson, 49, who worked on Apache attack helicopter systems for Lockheed Martin, was kidnapped last weekend by militants



Johnson

who threatened to kill him by Friday if the kingdom did not release its al-Qaida prisoners. The Saudi government rejected the demands.

He was the latest victim of an escalating campaign targeting Westerners that Saudi and U.S. officials say aims to drive foreign

workers from the kingdom and undermine the ruling royal family, hated by al-Qaida.

Al-Mogrin's group al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula has claimed responsibility for most anti-Westerner attacks in the past two months.

Earlier, as the deadline approached, Saudi security forces launched an all-out search, going door-to-door in some Riyadh neighborhoods, as Johnson's wife went on Arab television Friday pleading for his release. But officials admitted they had few leads on the group that abducted him or where he was being held.

After Johnson's death was reported, his family was in seclusion at a town house in Galloway Township, N.J., where they have been holding a vigil. A man in front of the house identified himself only as "Bill" and said the family did not want to talk to reporters.

One of the three photographs posted on the Web site showed a

man's head, face toward the camera, being held by a hand. The other two showed a beheaded body lying prone on a mattress, with the severed head placed in the small of his back, the clothes underneath bloodied.

The face looked like Johnson's. The beheaded body was clad in a bright orange jumpsuit, similar to one Johnson is seen wearing in earlier videos released by the kidnappers.

To the Americans and whoever is their ally in the infidel and criminal world and their allies in the war against Islam, this action is punishment to them and a lesson for them to know that whoever steps foot in our country, this decisive action will be his fate," the al-Qaida statement said.

Soon after the statement appeared, the Web site was inaccessible, with a message saying it was under maintenance.

Johnson is the second American to be kidnapped and beheaded in the Middle East in just over a month.

Messages of Support

★ I'm thinking of you guys all the time. Thank you so much for serving our country. Everyone is so proud of you, our soldiers. We are praying for you always. God Bless! Thank you! M. Handlon

★ I want to add my voice to the support of our men and women in uniform who are in the battle against evil. You are my heroes and in my prayers every day. Terry from Sacramento

★ hi i just wanted for it to say to Sgt. Tony Thomas everyone is supporting you we love you and miss you LOVECanece, Tarin, Ashlin and Tyler

★ To all you wonderful people in the Middle East protecting us: Thank you!!!! I support you and love you all!!!! Billie Jo Elliott-B. Piqua, Ohio, USA

★ Tommy we just wanted you to know how very proud all of us are of you. God bless those who serve. When things get tough try remember how very much your familia loves you. Please be safe and hurry back soon. We love you soooooo very much. Los Guerreros y Los Herrera's

★ Thank you all for your service to our country, especially to the Navy nukes. Where are those submarines? Anybody seen a submarine? From one of Rickover's sailors, medically retired, 1968, Bert L.

★ To Our Troops and To Their High-Ranking Officials -- THANK YOU for actively pursuing your resolve to end the despicable tyranny that has been occurring in the Middle East for decades. Of course no one likes nor wants to go to war, but as long as there are people who clearly choose to demonstrate warped power over their fellow man, physical measures will unfortunately have to be taken to rid the grim reaper(s).

Belgium fears worst in pedophile network

BY NAOMI KOPPEL

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — A day after a jury convicted Belgium's most hated man, Marc Dutroux, of multiple child rape and murder, the country was considering the impact of the trial and the questions it left unanswered.

"It's a small step for justice but a giant leap for Belgium," said a cartoon in the daily *Le Soir*, featuring the forewoman of the jury standing on the moon reading out the voluminous verdict.

Dutroux was found guilty of three murders and a slew of rapes and abductions. His ex-wife, Michele Martin, was convicted of leading two 8-year-old girls to starve to death in a base-

ment cell at her home, as well as involvement in the abductions.

Another man, Michel Lelievre, was convicted for the kidnapping and imprisonment of the girls, and for drug trafficking.

The fourth defendant, businessman Michel Nihoul, was convicted for trafficking drugs and people into Belgium but was acquitted of involvement in the abductions.

All four will be sentenced next week.

"Marc Dutroux could not have expected any understanding from the jury," the daily *De Standaard* said in an editorial. "The murder verdicts open the door wide for life imprisonment."

But most agreed that the ver-

dict has left much unanswered, especially the question of how widespread pedophile activity in the country may be.

Nihoul's acquittal on many of the charges suggests that the jury did not believe Dutroux's defense claims that he was a small cog in a vast network of child abduction and abuse.

Dutroux's arrest in 1996 provoked a widespread national soul-searching amid fears that the country could be harboring one of more major pedophile networks with links to the upper echelons of Belgian life.

Hundreds of thousands of people marched to protest slow and inept handling of the case, and millions signed a petition opposing the early release of convicted sex offenders.

EU close to deal on constitution

BY ED JOHNSON

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — European Union leaders were close Friday to overcoming disputes over power-sharing to clinch a first-ever constitution, a success many of them hoped would boost the 25-nation bloc's credibility in the eyes of a skeptical public.

David Roche, Irish minister for European Affairs, said leaders were "antitoxically close" to a deal on the constitution, six months after their last attempt to agree collapsed in acrimony over voting rules and other issues.

"The atmosphere is very, very positive," he said. "The issues that are outstanding are those of fine detail," he said, adding all that was left was "final finessing of the endgame." British Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman told *The Associated Press* a deal was "nearly there."

"We are still dotting the i's and crossing the t's," he said on customary condition of anonymity.

He said it was unclear whether leaders would now return to the divisive task of choosing a European Commission president, or put that off until a later date.

An EU diplomat, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said the leaders had resolved the voting rights dispute, by agreeing that for a measure to be passed, a majority of countries, plus one, representing 65 percent of the EU's population, must back it.

The diplomat said leaders expected to finish the talks shortly.

During the two day summit, leaders agreed on a host of sensitive issues, notably a new voting system, tax harmonization and even whether to refer to God in the text.

Biotech crops law

BERLIN — German lawmakers Friday approved a measure to protect consumers from accidentally buying genetically modified food, a reaction to the spread of biotech crops in a skeptical Europe.

The law creates a federal register of farmland where genetically modified plants are grown and threatens penalties against farmers who fail to abide by the rules.

Partner rights

PRAGUE, Czech Republic — Parliament on Friday gave the Czech gay community a measure to agree to discuss a draft law granting certain legal rights to same-sex partners, officials said.

Having turned down similar legislation in previous years, the debate several times in the past, deputies voted 72-49 to allow the draft to go into second reading.

From The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Ray Charles memorialized in Los Angeles

BY ANTHONY BREZNICAN

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Friends of Ray Charles sent the late singer off to a high note Friday.

B.B. King, Glen Campbell, Stevie Wonder and Wynton Marsalis performed musical tributes to Charles, who died last week at 73, during a joyous funeral service at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church.

Charles' son, the Rev. Robert Robinson Sr., started the service with a rousing tone, clapping his hands throughout a reading from the Old Testament. Then the Rev. Jesse Jackson added a New Testament reading threaded with his own inspirational message.

"Now heaven has a maestro," Robinson said. "Ray, when you first get there, before you meet Duke (Basie), before you meet Duke (Ellington), before you

meet family and friends, there's a man over there, across the river who is giving sight to the blind."

Friends and family of the singer, who had been blind since age 7, applauded and cheered.

Wille Nelson performed a tearful rendition of Charles' signature hit, "Georgia On My Mind," but wasn't allowed to leave the pulpit on a sad note — Charles' longtime manager, Joe Adams, teased him about always losing chess games to Charles.

Nelson joked that after his last loss to the sightless performer, he asked him, "Next time we play, can we turn the lights on?"

Charles was mourned by thousands who walked a long red carpet past his open casket Thursday.

Charles, who died last week at 73, sang such favorites as "I Can't Stop Loving You" and "Born to Lose."



A photo of music legend Ray Charles is adorned with flowers at his funeral at the First AME Church in Los Angeles, Friday. Charles died last week at 73.

Kerry proposes hiking minimum wage to \$7

BY NEDRA PICKLER

The Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry on Friday proposed raising the federal minimum wage to \$7 an hour by 2007, which he contended would benefit working women more than any other group.

"If President can go out and fight for four years to provide over a trillion in tax cuts to the wealthiest people in America, we can fight for a few months to raise the minimum wage for the poorest people in America," Kerry told an audience at Northern Virginia Community College.

Kerry's proposal, which calls for phasing in the \$1.85 increase, mirrors Democratic-sponsored plans proposed in the House and Senate.

Bush campaign spokesman Steve Schmidt said Bush would accept any reasonable, gradual increase but would not fund additional costs for small businesses and companies creating jobs.

Kerry rejected that argument. "Some people stand up and say, 'Oh, gosh, don't raise the minimum wage, that's going to hurt us in this small business.' But you know what? It never has."

Kerry said three of four women who would benefit from

the increase are adults. Such a boost in the minimum wage, which has not changed from \$5.15 since 1997, would provide a family with enough money to buy 10 months of groceries or pay for eight months of rent, he said.

Inflation has eroded the value of the last increase in minimum wage, Kerry said.

Kerry said Americans are "living with a minimum wage that is lower in value than when Harry Truman is president. That's unacceptable."

Eileen Appelbaum, a Rutgers University labor economist who supports the proposal, said raising the minimum wage by \$1.85 would translate into more than \$3,800 a year in additional income for a minimum-wage earner.

"If you're down at the bottom of the labor market, an increase of \$3,800 a year can make a real difference to families struggling to put food on the table, struggling to pay the rent," Appelbaum said in a conference call organized by the Kerry campaign.

Kerry said Thursday that more jobs will be created during the coming months, but "my candidacy is not based on the fact that we've lost a job here there." He said the campaign will continue based on the need for better health care, education, environmental protections and foreign policy.

city will look into the discrepancy in the water depth and also evaluate whether an emergency pump shut-off valve should be closer to the pool.

Powerful suction apparatus pulled the four victims to the bottom of the murky green pool at the Fort Worth Water Gardens on Wednesday, authorities said.

The four, in town from Chicago

Bush gets boost from McCain
President talks about war in Iraq on campaign stop at Fort Lewis

BY SCOTT LINDLAW

The Associated Press

FORT LEWIS, Wash. — Before cheering troops, President Bush got a strong endorsement on Iraq and a boost for his re-election campaign Friday from Sen. John McCain, the Arizona Republican courted by Democrat John Kerry to be his running mate.

McCain offered dire warnings about the threat from terrorists and from Saddam Hussein — words that matched the starkest language Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have employed. The support from McCain came as the president is trying to court rising questions about the invasion.

"Should the enemy acquire for their arsenal the chemical, biological and nuclear weapons they seek, this war [on terrorism] will become a fight for survival," McCain told thousands of GIs at the Army base here.

"That's why your courage is so indispensable to us."

Bush sat just behind McCain on a stage erected in an aircraft hangar, basking in the endorsement from his fierce opponent for the 2000 GOP presidential nomination. They seemed determined to project unity, heaping praise on each other with no mention of the bitter contest.

McCain said of Bush: "He has not wavered in his determination to protect this country and to make the world a better, safer, freer place. You will not yield, nor will he."

for a Sunday school convention, had gone to the public fountains for relief from the heat because their hotel pool was closed.

"This was not the result of someone violating the law and going swimming. This looks as though it was an accident," Police Chief Ralph Mendoza said.

Before Wednesday, visitors were often seen wading, splashing

"Should the enemy acquire for their arsenal the chemical, biological and nuclear weapons they seek, this war [on terrorism] will become an even bigger thing: It will become a fight for survival."

Sen. John McCain

R-Ariz.

or even taking a dip in the 5.4-acre park, which opened in 1974.

Oken executed

BALTIMORE — On the same day three-time murderer Steven Oken met with his adoptive parents for the last time, Betty Romano placed a wreath at the grave of her daughter Dawn Marie Garv-

McCain said 26 soldiers from this base had died in recent combat, Bush met with some of their families after the speeches, and with wounded GIs.

"Many of you will soon return to that just and necessary fight" in Iraq and Afghanistan, McCain said. "It's a fight between right and wrong, good and evil — it's no more ambiguous than that."

McCain has criticized Bush on certain issues — including tax cuts, the environment and Medicare — and has said more troops are needed in Iraq. But Bush and McCain have sought a broader political detente, cooperating where it benefited both men. Earlier this year, Bush named McCain to the commission investigating intelligence used to justify the Iraq war.

Interviews with soldiers and their spouses here suggested that while morale is intact, many soldiers have questions about the mission. Some are headed out for second tours of duty in Iraq.

"As a private citizen, I'm happy with what he's doing," said Sgt. Kenneth Krook, a member of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, which could be called to Iraq soon. "As a soldier... I'm basically supposed to do what they tell me to."

Desiree Snowden, whose husband is a sergeant at Fort Lewis, said she wasn't be voting for Bush because she feels he was too quick to deploy troops without a long-term plan. But she still welcomed the visit.

"If he's going to be campaigning in the area, at least take time out for the guys who are fighting the battle for you," she said.

in, one of Oken's victims, to mark the fulfillment of a vow for justice.

Oken, 42, was executed for the 1987 rape and murder of Garvin, 20. He also was convicted of killing Patricia Hirt, his wife's sister, and Lori Ward, a motel clerk in Maine, during a 15-day spree.

The execution was Maryland's fourth since the state resumed executions in 1994.

From The Associated Press

Texas pool under review

FORT WORTH, Texas — The 9-foot-deep garden pool where three children and a father drowned this week was originally designed to be 3 feet deep, a city official said, and an extensive safety review was planned.

Richard Zavala, parks and community services director, said the



War Is Tough on Families

Military life has enough challenges without worrying about how your loved ones will contact you... especially during times of conflict. I know, because I grew up in a military family and served as a Navy Admiral.

You can count on the American Red Cross to help you wherever you go. Whether you're at sea, or on an installation, we can help your loved ones back home get messages to you, or from you, in case of emergency. We can also help you through counseling and other needed assistance.

The Red Cross was there for my family, and we'll be there for yours. In fact, we support thousands of military families each year.

For more information, or to learn how you can help, please contact your local Red Cross or visit www.redcross.org. Thank you.



Marsha Evans
President and CEO, American Red Cross
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)



**American
Red Cross**

Together, we can save a life

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons

RAY CHARLES 1930-2004



BILL DEORE/Universal Press Syndicate



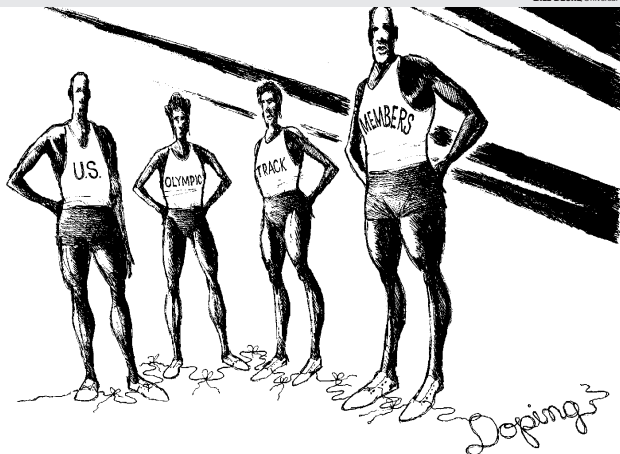
JOHN ROSE/Scripts Howard



JACK OHMAN/Tribune Media Services



BILL DEORE/Universal Press Syndicate



BILL DEORE/UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Gay marriage wins

MN NEW YORK MILLS — A New York man who argued in favor of same-sex marriages won the Great American Think-Off.

"I feel that same-sex marriages should be allowed because we all benefit when no one is excluded," said Robert Lerose, 44, a writer from Uniondale, N.Y.

In addition, he said, that when gays are allowed to marry "they will only strengthen the bonds between themselves and their communities and that can only be good for our country."

Lerose won the title of America's Greatest Thinker and \$500 when an audience of about 400 chose his argument over three others, including two who argued against gay marriage and another contestant who spoke in favor of it.

The Think-Off bills itself as a way for ordinary people to express their opinions on some of life's wackier questions in essays of 750 words or less.

Embassy notification

IL CHICAGO — The state child welfare agency agreed to notify the Mexican Consulate when it begins any abuse or neglect investigation that involves a Mexican citizen.

The agreement was updated in response to cases in which immigrant parents said they lost custody of their children because they didn't understand their rights or investigators' questions, officials said.

Every Hispanic parent contacted by a Department of Children of Family Services investigator will also get bilingual brochures explaining that they have the right to contact consulate attorneys for help.

Calif. kids can't vote

CA SACRAMENTO — California lawmakers rejected a proposed constitutional amendment that would have lowered the voting age.

Under the measure, 17-year-olds turning 18 by the general election would have been allowed to vote in primary elections.

The proposal, by Democratic Assemblyman Gene Mullin, aims to encourage voting among adults ages 18 to 24, who have the lowest voter turnout of all age groups.

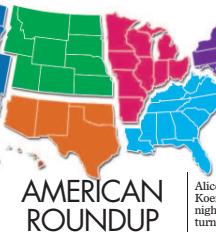
The bill fell eight votes shy of gathering the necessary two-thirds majority in the Assembly that would let voters decide the issue.

Only about 16 percent of the youngest eligible voters took part in the last election, Mullin said, calling that a "disturbing and dangerous trend."

"I really do believe that if you get high school students interested, they will register, they will vote and they'll become active participants," said Mullin, who has been a high school government teacher for 32 years.

Record-setting poker

CT HARTFORD — You can reasonably bet that Larry Olmsted is pretty sick of



seven-card stud.

The Vermont native sat at a poker table at Foxwoods Resort Casino on Mashantucket at 1:22 p.m. and remained there for the next 72 hours, taking occasional bathroom breaks but never leaving the poker area.

Olmsted's feat was intended to set the record for the longest casual poker session, one that has yet to be certified by Guinness World Records to become official.

"It's not for the girls, and not the money. It's for the glory," Olmsted said.

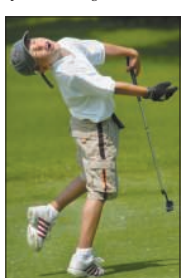
Under Guinness rules, Olmsted, 38, was required to play almost every hand, except for one 15 minute break every eight hours.

He sat down with \$100 in poker chips and ended with around \$1,000 in winnings, although he gave most of it away in tips to the Foxwoods staff. He played seven-card stud, with a 50 cent ante and a \$1 forced bet with a \$5 max.

TB-exposed teens

TX ALICE — Up to 150 South Texas high school students were being tested for tuberculosis because they may have been exposed to the airborne disease during a field trip.

The Alice students came in contact with a person with active tuberculosis during an April 30 trip to Fiesta Texas in San Antonio, Texas Department of Health spokesman Doug McBride said.



Not his best shot

Jacob Vanitvelt, 8, of Grand Blanc, Mich., reacts to missing a putt on the 2nd green at Pierce Park Golf course in Flint, Mich. He was playing on the opening day of the annual Flint Golf Association tournament.

last week in the Corpus Christi Call-er-Times.

He would not disclose the person's identity but said the exposure did not occur at the park.

At last report, no one had tested positive for the disease, McBride said.

Between 100 and 150 students, eight teachers and several chaperones traveled on three buses to San Antonio, Alice High School principal Amy Koenning said. They spent the night at a San Antonio hotel and returned home on May 1.

Honey, I lost the bees

MT BOZEMAN — A tractor-trailer overturned on a curve on a highway, spilling its load of hundreds of beehives and unleashing some 9 million angry honey bees.

The bees buzzed furiously as driver Lane Miller, his arm scraped to the bone, struggled to flee his rig after it overturned in Bear Trap Canyon west of Bozeman. The truck slid across the highway before coming to a stop between guardrails.

Miller, 41, walked away from the crash, and two people picked him up and took him to the hospital. Miller underwent surgery on his arm and suffered bruises and about 20 stings.

The state road was closed for 14 hours as crews and beekeepers cleaned up the 512 hives Miller was hauling from Idaho to North Dakota.

Embezzler to pay

VA MANASSAS — Lisa Bailey embezzled more than \$109,000 from the Prince William County Soil and Water District, and now she's paying her way out of a prison sentence.

But Bailey's bailout is no bribe; the judge is making her pay instead of putting her behind bars.

On Thursday, Judge LeRoy F. Millette sentenced Bailey to two months in jail, which she has already served, and said the district badly needs her \$800 in monthly restitution to meet its payroll.

"I think you're getting off easy too easily and if you violate any of the terms of this restitution I'm going to put you back in prison," Millette said.

He ordered Bailey to pay the \$800 a month for nearly 10 years and placed her on probation for 10 years. She could have been sentenced to more than 19 years in prison.

Bailey admitted to forging checks and using district credit cards for personal items while working there in 2003. She pleaded guilty to the charges April 22.

Insurance law costly

CO DENVER — A change in the state's auto insurance law is costing local hospitals millions of dollars, officials say. Last year, lawmakers seeking to lower auto insurance premiums passed a bill eliminating requirements for personal injury protection. Now hospitals are providing more care to thousands of accident victims without health insurance who also have no medical coverage from auto insurance.



A swinging good time While others wait for their turn, Charlie Rhodes, top, and Brent Blakeney, both 18, drop into the James River in Richmond, Va. About a dozen high school students, some of them recent graduates, gathered at the rope swing to cool off.



100 and counting

Visitors walk through the rotunda of the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. The museum marked its 100th anniversary, and is one of the most popular attractions in the city, featuring a massive elephant called Henry.



Grounded gorilla

After spending three months indoors, Fubu, a Western lowland gorilla, is released to the outdoor northern habitat at the Dallas Zoo. The habitat underwent changes including new hot wire and placement of logs to be used as "gorilla speed bumps," after a gorilla at the zoo escaped the habitat March 18. The gorilla, called Jabari, was killed 40 minutes later by members of the Dallas Police SWAT Team.



Where is Snoopy? Three Red Baron Squadron fully-restored historic Boeing Stearman biplanes fly in formation above Providence, R.I. The Red Baron Squadron is in town to perform at the Rhode Island National Guard Air Show on Saturday and Sunday.



Road-weary traveler With Route 21 near Naples, N.Y., still closed because of major road damage by a rain storm three weeks ago, the highway made a nice place for this turtle to take a nap Thursday.



Splashed on Left to right, R.C. Garcia, Miranda Trevizo and Joshua Lindley are sprayed with water as car drives through a puddle after a rain storm in Texico, N.M.

Fish free in Vermont

VT MAIDSTONE — The state opened its parks, fishing holes, and historic sites last weekend in an annual attempt to show more Vermonters the attractions available close by.

Free fishing was to include a fishing festival for children at the Ed Weed Fish Culture Station in Grand Isle, where children could catch a rainbow trout from a stocked pond.

All of the 46 Vermont state park day areas and the state's 10 historic sites were to be open for free on both days of the weekend.

The state offers the free admission to encourage people to visit the sites, said John Dunsville, the chief of the historic sites.

About 500 people showed up for the fishing festival last year, said John Hall, a spokesman for the Fish and Wildlife Department.

The free fishing day was open to Vermont residents and nonresidents alike.

Wild chickens born free

GA FITZGERALD — Leaders of this south Georgia town are in the midst of a simmering debate as divisive as any in the town's history — wild chickens.

The birds are believed to have descended from red junglefowl that were brought from Southeastern Asia in the 1960s in a failed attempt to provide a pheasantlike game bird for the South. Over the past six years, the population has exploded — well into the hundreds.

Anti-birders want elected leaders to do something about it. Fans of the fowl say the town shouldn't trap chickens but embrace them, maybe even passing an ordinance protecting them.

Both sides presented petitions to the town council.

Youth jail still a mess

HI HONOLULU — The state has done little to correct acknowledged crowded, unsanitary and abusive conditions at the state's youth prison, the American Civil Liberties Union said in asking Gov. Linda Lingle to take immediate action to alleviate the situation.

In a letter to Lingle, the ACLU of Hawaii also contends the Office of Youth Services has been uncooperative in working with the civil rights group to ease harsh living conditions at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility in Kailua.

Lingle said she would review the ACLU's latest findings with her staff and take action if needed.

But she also joined First Deputy Attorney General Richard T. Bissen in saying the state has cooperated and taken immediate steps to address the concerns raised by the ACLU last August.

Robber takes birds

WI OSHKOSH — A fowl robber has made off with a fowl haul.

Nine birds — including a screech owl that is blind in one eye, three ring-necked pheasants and five quail — were snatched by someone who broke into a local zoo's Wisconsin Native Bird Aviary.

Terry Steele, enrichment coordi-

nator with the Oshkosh Zoological Society, said children he was teaching in a class noticed a hole cut in the wire screening at the aviary Monday morning.

"It's sad that anyone would do such a thing. It just seems malicious to me," Steele said.

Two cultures in the aviary were not taken.

It should cost less than \$200 to make repairs and replace the birds, except for the screech owl, said Carrie Hill, a zoo specialist.

Apology leads to arrest

UT SALT LAKE CITY — Being able to apologize is a virtue. But for one alleged thief, it became the quickest way to jail.

Police say Peter Shelley, 24, punched a convenience store clerk and stole a pack of cigarettes on June 6 after he refused to show the clerk his identification.

But last week, police say Shelley returned to the gas station and apologized to the clerk — twice.

The clerk called police, who caught Shelley in his car near the gas station and arrested him.

Shelley was arrested and faces felony strong-arm robbery charges.

W hale recovering

TX HOUSTON — A whale that beached along the Texas Gulf coast, covered in sharp spines and unable to swim, is recovering in an above-ground pool and eating about 30 pounds of fish and squid a day, rescuers said.

The 8-foot-long, 310-pound melon-headed whale, named Memory for the Memorial Day weekend when it was found, could spend up to three months in recovery before being returned to the wild.

Melon-headed whales are deep-water creatures, rarely seen alone or near the Gulf coastline, and marine biologists were trying to determine what caused Memory to end up at High Island.

The volunteer group rescued Memory within two hours, and it was taken to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Galveston laboratory.

Fewer school districts

AR LITTLE ROCK — State education officials said Arkansas will have 52 fewer school districts when classes start this fall.

The districts were eliminated during mergers this spring under a new state law to help address an Arkansas Supreme Court ruling that the state's school system was unconstitutional.

As of July, Arkansas will have 256 school districts, instead of 308 school districts.

Missing pension alleged

LA NEW ORLEANS — The child support division of the Orleans Parish district attorney's office missed about \$24,000 on holiday parties, birthday cakes, gifts for retirees, alcohol and other items, according to a state audit.

The questioned spending took place during the final two years of District Attorney Harry Connick's tenure. The state constitution prohibits spending public money on holiday parties and gifts for employees.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



EUROPEAN FORECAST

Benelux: Mostly cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the lower 60s and lows in the mid-40s.

Britain, Ireland: Mostly cloudy with rain showers and isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the lower 60s and lows in the upper 40s to lower 50s.

Croatia and Bosnia: Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the upper 50s.

France: Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the mid-40s in the north. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the lower 60s in the south.

Northern Germany: Mostly cloudy with rain showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the mid-60s and lows in the mid-40s.

Southern Germany: Cloudy with rain showers and thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 60s and lows in the upper 40s.

Hungary: Partly cloudy. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the upper 50s.

Northern Italy: Partly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms in the afternoon. Highs in the upper 70s to lower 80s and lows in the upper 50s to lower 60s.

Southern Italy: Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 80s and lows in the lower 60s.

Kosovo: Mostly cloudy with morning fog. Highs in the upper 70s and lows in the upper 50s.

Norway: Cloudy with rain showers. Highs in the upper 50s and lows in the upper 40s.

Portugal, Spain: Mostly cloudy with rain showers and isolated thunderstorms in northern Spain. Partly cloudy elsewhere. Highs in the upper 70s to lower 80s on the coast and inland and in the lower 80s in the south. Lows in the upper 50s in the south and inland and lower 60s on the coast.

Turkey: Mostly cloudy with isolated thunderstorms. Highs in the upper 70s along the north coast and in the 80s inland and in the south. Lows in the upper 50s inland and upper 60s elsewhere.

AFRICA

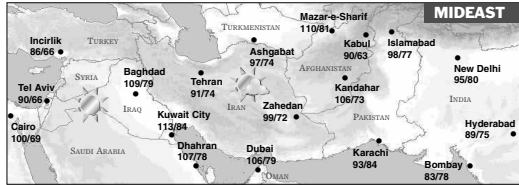
Amsterdam	HI 60	LO 44	Mogadishu	HI 74	LO 54
Bahia	HI 82	LO 71	Nairobi	HI 82	LO 62
Beijing	HI 84	LO 74	Rabat	HI 76	LO 60
Bombay	HI 88	LO 78	Tripoli	HI 84	LO 70

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	HI 60	LO 44	Manila	HI 88	LO 78
Bahia	HI 82	LO 71	Mexico City	HI 74	LO 54
Beijing	HI 84	LO 74	Montreal	HI 78	LO 68
Bombay	HI 88	LO 78	Panama	HI 88	LO 78
Buenos Aires	HI 84	LO 74	Rio de Janeiro	HI 88	LO 78
Calcutta	HI 88	LO 78	Sao Paulo	HI 88	LO 78
Chennai	HI 88	LO 78	Sydney	HI 88	LO 78
Hong Kong	HI 88	LO 78	Tokyo	HI 88	LO 78

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

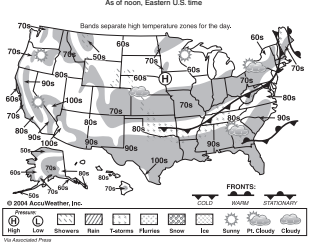
Alabama	HI 93	LO 72	Arkansas	HI 93	LO 72
Arizona	HI 93	LO 72	California	HI 93	LO 72
Colorado	HI 93	LO 72	Connecticut	HI 93	LO 72
Delaware	HI 93	LO 72	District of Columbia	HI 93	LO 72
Florida	HI 93	LO 72	Georgia	HI 93	LO 72
Idaho	HI 93	LO 72	Illinois	HI 93	LO 72
Indiana	HI 93	LO 72	Iowa	HI 93	LO 72
Kansas	HI 93	LO 72	Kentucky	HI 93	LO 72
Louisiana	HI 93	LO 72	Maine	HI 93	LO 72
Massachusetts	HI 93	LO 72	Michigan	HI 93	LO 72
Minnesota	HI 93	LO 72	Mississippi	HI 93	LO 72
Missouri	HI 93	LO 72	Montgomery	HI 93	LO 72
Nebraska	HI 93	LO 72	Nevada	HI 93	LO 72
Nevada	HI 93	LO 72	New Hampshire	HI 93	LO 72
New Jersey	HI 93	LO 72	New Mexico	HI 93	LO 72
New York	HI 93	LO 72	North Carolina	HI 93	LO 72
North Dakota	HI 93	LO 72	Ohio	HI 93	LO 72
Ohio	HI 93	LO 72	Oklahoma	HI 93	LO 72
Oklahoma	HI 93	LO 72	Oregon	HI 93	LO 72
Oregon	HI 93	LO 72	Pennsylvania	HI 93	LO 72
Pennsylvania	HI 93	LO 72	Rhode Island	HI 93	LO 72
Rhode Island	HI 93	LO 72	South Carolina	HI 93	LO 72
South Carolina	HI 93	LO 72	South Dakota	HI 93	LO 72
South Dakota	HI 93	LO 72	Tennessee	HI 93	LO 72
Tennessee	HI 93	LO 72	Texas	HI 93	LO 72
Texas	HI 93	LO 72	Vermont	HI 93	LO 72
Vermont	HI 93	LO 72	Virginia	HI 93	LO 72
Virginia	HI 93	LO 72	Washington	HI 93	LO 72
Washington	HI 93	LO 72	West Virginia	HI 93	LO 72
West Virginia	HI 93	LO 72	Wisconsin	HI 93	LO 72
Wisconsin	HI 93	LO 72	Wyoming	HI 93	LO 72
Wyoming	HI 93	LO 72			



MIDEAST

Amsterdam	HI 60	LO 44	Manila	HI 88	LO 78
Bahia	HI 82	LO 71	Mexico City	HI 74	LO 54
Beijing	HI 84	LO 74	Montreal	HI 78	LO 68
Bombay	HI 88	LO 78	Panama	HI 88	LO 78
Buenos Aires	HI 84	LO 74	Rio de Janeiro	HI 88	LO 78
Calcutta	HI 88	LO 78	Sao Paulo	HI 88	LO 78
Chennai	HI 88	LO 78	Sydney	HI 88	LO 78
Hong Kong	HI 88	LO 78	Tokyo	HI 88	LO 78

THE UNITED STATES TODAY



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STARS AND STRIPES.

FACES 'N' PLACES

Stars' clothing on display at airport

Some travelers passing through Atlanta's sprawling airport soon will have some famous duds to gaze at on their way to the gates.



Jackson

Cowboy boots worn by Alan Jackson, a leather jacket signed by the two members of OutKast and a silk jacket worn by Ray Charles are going on display at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

The 300-foot-long display will include highlights from the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. The exhibit will be finished within a week and will stay up until July 2005, officials said.

The hall of fame, which has struggled to attract big crowds to its Macon home despite Georgia's rich music heritage, is hoping a high-profile display at Hartsfield will boost visits.

"Our idea was how to get maximum exposure for the museum," said spokeswoman Jessica Walden-Griner.

Garcia influenced by native country

Andy Garcia says a longing for his native Cuba is the guiding force behind his next movie, which will be filmed in the Dominican Republic starting next week.

Garcia, 48, was born in Havana but left Cuba with his family when he was 5 for Miami Beach, Fla. Garcia's family left after Fidel Castro's revolution in 1959, and Garcia has been a critic of Castro's communist government.

"The Lost City" will focus on the transition from the rule of dictator Fulgencio Batista to Castro's take-over. Garcia's character, a cabaret owner, eventually leaves the country to go into exile in New York.

Novelist Guillermo Cabrera Infante, a Cuban exile who is also a critic of Castro, wrote the script for the movie, which Garcia also will direct.



Garcia

A personal ode to Greece

Forty years after providing the musical soul for "Zorba the Greek," Mikis Theodorakis has written a personal ode to Greece.



Theodorakis

"This is not my story," the 78-year-old composer said Tuesday, announcing a new musical that mixes his works with his well-known political passions. "It's the story of Greece."

The show, "A Life Full of Greece," opens next week in Athens as part of the cultural events leading up to the start of the summer Olympics in August.

Theodorakis has set the play between 1950 and 1975, turbulent years for Greece framed by the end military dictatorship. Theodorakis' music was a rallying point for junta opponents.

Celebrities pitch in for fund-raiser

Donald Trump, Don King, Avril Lavigne and Ed McMahon are among the celebrities offering private lunches, guitar lessons and other items in an eBay auction to raise money for the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

The highest bidder can play tennis with Trump, spend an afternoon with Arnold Palmer or win an internship at Esquire magazine or ABC radio.

Other items include a guitar lesson from Paul Stanley of Kiss, a visit to the set of NBC's "Fear Factor" and lunch with Lavigne.

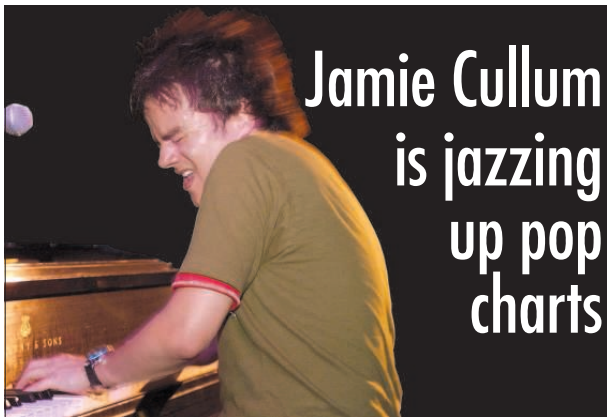
All proceeds will benefit the non-profit foundation, based in Santa Monica, which provides funds for prostate cancer research.

The auction is pegged to Father's Day and will run through Monday.



Trump

Photos and stories from The Associated Press



Jamie Cullum is jazzing up pop charts

British pianist invades MTV with punk-infused jazz songs

By CHARLES J. GANS
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — MTV rarely covers jazz, but Jamie Cullum is a different story.

A recent "You Hear It First" segment on MTV News included an enthusiastic thumbs-up from superproducer Pharrell Williams, who was so blown away by Cullum's jazz version of his hip-hop hit "Frontin'" that he pronounced the 24-year-old British singer-pianist "definitely our kind of people."

In Britain, the original new talent has enjoyed unexpected, Norah Jones-like success with his major label debut, "Twentysomething." The CD has sold more than 1 million copies since its October release, making Cullum the top-selling British jazz artist ever. It was his first release under a million-pound recording deal with Universal.

Cullum, who infuses his jazz with punk, heavy metal and hip-hop influences, has now invaded America with a resequenced version of "Twentysomething" (Verve) and a monthlong tour. His CD has climbed to No. 2 on Billboard's contemporary jazz chart, right behind Norah Jones' "Feels Like Home."

While Cullum and Jones both cross genres and generations, Cullum says "the only similarities are the fact that we both play piano and we sing."

Jones is subtle and introverted, a well-schooled musician who blends jazz with soul, country, blues and folk. Cullum is precocious, extroverted, largely self-taught — and in love with pop music.

"For me, jazz is the widest platform possible to do everything I want to do," Cullum said.

Cullum's CD hardly captures the excitement of his live performances. He is no "scooby-doo" style crooner, but more like "Scrappy Doo" — energetic, feisty, risky, a 5-foot-4 bantamweight with spiky brown hair and the attitude of a punk rocker or hip-hopper.

His music isn't the only thing that sets him apart from retro, suit-wearing young jazz crooners like Peter Cincotti or Michael Buble. He shows up



AP photos

Jamie Cullum, a 24-year-old British singer-pianist, impressed musician Pharrell Williams with his jazz version of Williams' hip-hop hit "Frontin'."

for an interview wearing a T-shirt, paint-splattered blue jeans and scruffy sneakers.

With vocals mixing the technique of jazz singers like Harry Connick Jr. and Kurt Elling with the raw, gravelly tone of Kurt Cobain, Cullum shaves away from crooning.

Cullum opened a May set at Joe's Pub in Greenwich Village standing on top of the piano as he launched into his opening number, Cole Porter's "I Get a Kick Out Of You." He then stood at the piano, pounding out the melody and slamming the keyboard with his foot to accentuate the word "kick." On "I Could Have Danced All Night," he slapped out the beat on the wooden piano frame and played inside the piano.

He may be shaking up the jazz scene, but in some ways Cullum is a throwback to an older, pre-bebop generation of jazz musicians who saw themselves as entertainers and embraced the popular music of their day.

"Jazz used to be about dancing, drinking and girls, but the first time I went to a jazz club all I saw were old men and no girls," said Cullum.

"I'm not trying to change jazz," said

Cullum. "I'm just trying to make music that I feel comfortable with ... and that I could relate to as a young man."

Cullum, who grew up in rural England, comes from a musically inclined family, but never took to formal training. His biggest musical influence has been his brother Ben, a songwriter and dance music producer who now lives near him in London.

As a child, Cullum started on piano, but switched to guitar because he loved its powerful sound. When he got back to piano as a teenager, he was into loud, percussive boogie-woogie and rock 'n' roll piano.

Cullum, who played in grunge and hip-hop bands as a teenager, says he discovered jazz through the "back door."

Listening to heavy metal, he found himself drawn to the guitar solos, which led him to jazz instrumental solos. Then he discovered the jazz samples used by hip-hop bands such as a Tribe Called Quest and Public Enemy. As he got into songwriting, he found his role models such as Bob Dylan and Tom Waits talking about George Gershwin and Porter.

When he was 16, Cullum began immersing himself more in jazz piano, but he didn't think seriously about a musical career until he attended the University of Reading, where he majored in English and film studies.

He earned money playing gigs everywhere from strip clubs to weddings and funerals, and at age 19 used his student loan money to cut a record, "Heard It All Before," to sell at shows. He sold his second record, "Pointless Nostalgic," to an independent jazz label, Candid. Its success — along with major boost from the popular BBC TV talk show host Michael Parkinson — helped Cullum net his big Universal/Verve deal.

Cullum says he isn't nervous about whether his success in Britain can translate to the American market.

"I think the U.S. audience seems to be responding to the eclecticism of the music quite well," said Cullum. "But my expectations when it comes to record sales are always zero. I just like playing music and I like to develop."

Horoscope

Mercury transits into Cancer, where it will be until the Fourth of July. Cancer is the sign of heightened sensitivity and psychic awareness, and when our planet of communication is there, we can expect to be gifted not only with the power to read between the lines but to read when there are no lines as well. Silence speaks volumes.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(June 19) This year brings outstandingly positive changes in your mind as well as your body. A new exercise regimen has you in fine shape by summer's end. That healthy glow is so attractive, a Taurus or Leo takes notice and wants all of your love. Babies may be conceived and other opportunities to expand may arrive as early as September.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You know just what you want and how to get it. The only thing stopping you is the other thing you want. Your desires are in direct competition with one another. Figure out which you want more, and give up all things opposite.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Follow your interest in global issues. This could grow to involve more of your time and possibly lead to a new career. Loved ones are more in touch with your needs now and may give you more space and freedom as a result.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

When you stop thinking so much and take action, your productivity kicks into high gear. Sure, you're a thoughtful intellect, Gemini, but you really don't have to think through the difference between right and wrong.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

The status quo is not enough for you, and it's also frustrating to set your sights beyond your current capabilities. The stars help you lighten up and see life as a step-by-step process. Rome wasn't built in a day.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

You're feeling quite disciplined, but be careful not to channel all of this into work, or you'll be in a boring mood

for sure! You not only deserve to have fun — you need to do this in order to keep your pace through next week.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Sure, you can dream big with the best of them. But you're in a conservative mood and will handle practical issues with great efficiency — who wouldn't want your help? That's why some of you will get a marriage proposal.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

You want to know for sure that you've got friends, but you're not in the mood to make time for them! Sort out your priorities. Don't say "yes" to one single thing until you've consulted your schedule, your journal and your spouse.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

There's a financial reward for past actions taken. You're coming to terms with people from your past who teach you both what you want and what you don't want from love. You and a Cancer may sneak away together.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

When it comes to making special arrangements and finding ways to satisfy more of the people more of the time, you've got it nailed! Just don't forget to consider your own feelings in the process.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Others perceive you as being highly capable and therefore seem overwhelmed with your achievements. What do you have to do to get a little support? Know you're achieving for yourself, and provide rewards along the way.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

People around you seem nuts, and you shake your head and try to stay out of it. Not a bad approach, as you've got better things to do with your time — like invent the next revolutionary product or work for an end to hunger.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You seem to be the hub of the action, and you've got very positive things to say to people, too. No wonder you'll pick up some new admirers — people who might later ask, "Who was that charming person?"

Creators Syndicate

Joyce Jillson



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



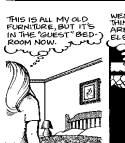
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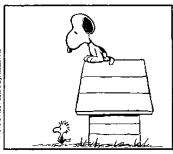
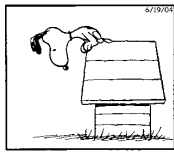
Red Rover



Better or Worse



Peanuts



West stays in draft as others opt for college

The Associated Press

Two of the Southeastern Conference's top players, All-American Lawrence Roberts of Mississippi State and Brandon Bass of LSU, pulled out of the NBA Draft on Thursday and will return to their schools next season.

Saint Joseph's guard Delonte West, meanwhile, will skip his senior season and remain in the June 24 draft, despite not being projected as a first-round pick. Only players selected in the first round get guaranteed contracts.

Charlotte center Martin Ill and Washington guard Nate Robinson also withdrew their names from consideration before the Thursday afternoon deadline.

Roberts, the SEC's player of the year, said there were "too many unanswered questions" after he participated in last week's NBA pre-draft camp.

"Any time you have a situation like that, the best remedy is to answer the questions people have about their heads," Roberts told ESPN News. "That's going back to school, and proving I'm a higher pick than people might think."

Bass was the SEC's freshman of the year, averaging 12.8 points and 7.4 rebounds a game. After the camp, Bass also worked out for the Boston Celtics, Indianapolis Pacers and San Antonio Spurs.

"I learned what I need to improve on and I got a feel for what my strengths are," Bass said. "It was a tough decision, but I feel good about it."

West, an honorable mention All-American last season, played well during the pre-draft camp in Chicago while battling through a sprained right foot. He averaged 18.9 points and 5.4 rebounds for Saint Joseph's.

High school star Al Jefferson, a possible lottery pick, is staying in



Delonte West decided to stay in the NBA Draft instead of returning to Saint Joseph's despite not being projected as a first-round pick.

the draft pool but won't sign with an agent, leaving open the possibility that he could play college ball for Arkansas.

The forward averaged 42.6 points, 18 rebounds and seven blocks during his senior season at Prentiss (Miss.) High School.

He declared for the draft in May and participated in the pre-draft camp but didn't sign with an agent. The 7-foot player from Australia averaged 6 points and 4.7 rebounds per game and made Conference USA's all-freshman team.

Robinson was a key member of the Huskies, who went 19-12 last season and reached the NCAA tournament. He averaged 13.2 points, 3.9 rebounds, 2.7 assists and 1.7 steals as a sophomore.

"I'm going to take Husky basketball back to where it needs to be, back to a winning program like we did last year, and even better," Robinson said.

NBA Draft order Thursday, June 24 First round

1. Orlando
2. L.A. Clippers
3. Chicago
4. Charlotte Bobcats (expansion)
5. Washington
6. Atlanta
7. Phoenix
8. Toronto
9. Philadelphia
10. Cleveland
11. Golden State
12. Seattle
13. Portland
14. Utah
15. Boston
16. Utah (from New York through Phoenix)
17. Atlanta (from Milwaukee through Denver and Detroit)
18. New Orleans
19. Miami
20. Denver
21. Utah (from Houston)
22. New Jersey
23. Portland (from Memphis)
24. Boston (from Dallas)
25. Boston (from Detroit)
26. Sacramento
27. L.A. Lakers
28. San Antonio
29. Indiana
30. Minnesota's first-round pick has been forfeited

Hamilton, Wallace invited to Olympics

The Associated Press

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Ben Wallace and Richard Hamilton of the NBA champion Detroit Pistons have been asked to play for the U.S. Olympic team in Athens.

Both said Thursday they had yet to respond to the invitation. "I haven't really thought about it," Hamilton said after a daylong celebration with fans. "I'll probably take a couple days to think about it."

Wallace said essentially the same thing. But earlier this month, he seemed to be sure of his intentions.

"They asked me if I would say, 'Yes' to playing on the team, and I said, 'Yes,'" Wallace said on June 1. "I don't know if they have decided what to do because they haven't announced it yet."

Wallace is a two-time Defensive Player of the Year. He was on the All-NBA second team and Eastern Conference All-Star team for a second straight time this season. Wallace averaged 10.3 points, 14.3 rebounds and 2.4 blocks for the Pistons in the post-season.

Hamilton is among the best players in the NBA without an All-Star appearance. He led Detroit in scoring at 21.5 points a game, five more than any of his teammates, in 23 playoff games.

The U.S. Basketball selection committee has had to scramble to fill its 12-player roster for Athens because many stars opted against playing in the Olympics.

McGrady, Magic owner to meet

ORLANDO, Fla. — Magic owner Rich DeVos is preparing to make his best pitch to get Tracy McGrady to stay in Orlando.

DeVos, the salesman who built the Anway empire, wants the NBA's leading scorer to know that the team is committed to becoming a winner again — and that he'd like McGrady to be part of that future.

McGrady, whose seven-year, \$93 million contract runs through the 2006-07 season, can opt out of the deal after next season.



Briefs

Magic officials want to know if McGrady wants to be part of rebuilding a team that finished with a league-worst 21-61 record last season. If he doesn't, they'll look to trade him.

DeVos and the Magic have at least a couple things going for them as they start to rebuild. Orlando owns the No. 1 pick in next week's draft, and it featured Grant Hill is healthy and hoping to take another crack at a comeback.

If that's not enough to persuade McGrady to stay, the Magic will look to restock their roster by moving him.

Milicic undergoes surgery, could miss Olympics

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Darko Milicic broke his right hand in a token appearance in the Detroit Pistons' NBA title clincher, an injury that could jeopardize his chances of playing for Serbia in the Olympics.

The second overall pick in the NBA Draft was hurt at the end of the fifth and final game of the NBA Finals.

The 7-footer, who will turn 19 on Sunday, had surgery on the hand Wednesday. Detroit president of basketball operations Joe Dumars said.

The team said he is expected to miss eight weeks.

Hornets promote Bristow to GM

NEW ORLEANS — The New Orleans Hornets selected Allan Bristow to replace Bob Bass as general manager on Thursday.

Bristow, a former Hornets coach, was an assistant to Bass last season. Bass announced two months ago that he would retire after the NBA Draft June 24.

Bristow will handle the team's day-to-day basketball operations and oversee player personnel decisions.

Pistons seemed to have paved new path for NBA

BY LARRY LAGE

The Associated Press

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. — Larry Brown said he could get used to having his season drag into June.

The NBA might have to get used to his Detroit Pistons, or at least their formula for success.

Detroit proved a true team could rule a league that seems to think it's not possible to win without a superstar.

The Pistons had only one All-Star this season and it was Ben Wallace, who didn't average 10 points a game.

Chauncey Billups was the MVP of the NBA Finals, but an argument could be made that his four fellow starters deserved the award.

■ Wallace for his tenacious defense, relentless rebounding and surprising scoring.

■ The other Wallace, Rasheed, for allow-

ing the Pistons to even be in a position to face — and beat — the star-studded Los Angeles Lakers.

■ Richard Hamilton, for leading the team in scoring in the finals.

■ Tayshaun Prince, for stifling Kobe Bryant with his long-armed defense.

"I won the MVP award, but it belongs to all of us," Billups said. "I think we've made the new blueprint for winning. It's all about personalities and chemistry and finding the right mix of players."

Former Pistons star Joe Dumars, president of basketball operations, built a team that fancies across the state full of it.

And they showed their love Thursday. After a thorough Jeffery Ave. for a parade, and more squeezed into Hart Plaza for a rally, the celebration went to The Palace.

A sign outside one entrance read "Sold Out" as hundreds of cars couldn't even get into the sprawling parking lot.

Inside, 22,076 seats were filled and the aisles had more fans sitting and standing.

Flashbuds went off almost constantly as players, coaches and executives spoke from a stage in the middle of the court.

When a few addressed the crowd, it was so loud at times that they couldn't be heard.

It was really boisterous after Billups shouted "Carmelo Who? Carmelo Who?" in reference to the team drafting Darko Milicic instead of Carmelo Anthony.

An ear-ringing cheer welcomed Ben Hall, the fan favorite of a popular team.

"We've got the recipe figured out — now we just need to keep everything together," Wallace said.

Dumars' No. 1 priority is to re-sign Rasheed Wallace, an unrestricted free agent.

At Hart Plaza, the crowd chanted: "We want Speed! We want Speed!" and at The

Palace, he drew one of many screaming, standing ovations.

"I love all of 'em," said Wallace, who repeatedly has declined to talk about his plans.

His agent, Bill Strickland, would not tip his hand about his client's plans, but did reveal what Wallace is looking for.

"He's always told me that he wanted to be part of a veteran team that had a chance to win," Strickland said.

He also stated that the 63-year-old Brown, celebrated the first NBA title of his Hall of Fame career, might retire after coaching in the Athens Olympics.

"I'd like to be back," Brown said. "There's a lot of guys that made a lot of sacrifices for me, and hopefully I'd like to do the same for them."

When reporters told Brown he wasn't being clear, he said there was "no doubt" he would return for the second year of his five-year deal.

Mets traded for Hidalgo in bid to spark offense

By JOEL ANDERSON
The Associated Press

HOUSTON — Hoping to help their sagging offense, the New York Mets acquired right fielder Richard Hidalgo from the Houston Astros on Thursday for right-handed David Weathers and Jeremy Griffiths.

Hidalgo has put up big numbers in the past, but he's been in the midst of a disappointing season with the Astros. He recently lost his starting job to Jason Lane, and soon after went to General Manager Gerry Hunsicker and asked to be traded.

"We're pleased to have him," Mets manager Art Howe said. "I know what he can do. He's a run-producer, an outstanding right-fielder. He hasn't played on a regular basis. He'll get that opportunity here. It's a fresh start for him. I know he's a good middle-of-the-order hitter."

Weathers adds an experienced middle reliever to Houston's bullpen, which is in desperate need of help there. The Mets also got \$4 million from the Astros to offset the difference in salaries.

The 28-year-old Hidalgo is batting .256 with four homers and 30 RBIs, a huge drop-off from last year's .309 average with 28 home runs and 88 RBIs. He was voted the Astros' MVP in 2003.

Hidalgo had been in Houston's organization since he was signed out of Venezuela at age 16 in 1991.



Hidalgo

This could be the first of several moves for the slumping Astros, who entered Thursday night fifth in the NL Central. Houston had lost 20 of 32, dropping to 33-31.

Hidalgo's struggles at the plate were symptomatic of the team's overall problems on offense — the Astros had been held to fewer than five runs for 15 straight games.

"We're not going to watch what we're been watching all year," Hunsicker said. "We're going to try to create a spark."

New York will probably put Hidalgo in the middle of the lineup, hoping he can provide some needed protection for Mike Piazza and Cliff Floyd. Hidalgo was expected to join the Mets in time for Friday night's game against Detroit.

Hidalgo is still owed \$6.62 million of his \$12 million salary this season, and the Mets inherit a \$15 million option for 2005. But they're almost sure to decline that and pay a \$2 million buyout.

"Fifteen million is a difficult salary," Mets General Manager Jim Duquette said.

"I love it here. This is like my second home," he said. "This is my first time being traded. It's a business. I don't have any control about it."



Los Angeles Dodgers' Juan Encarnacion, left, is out at second as the Baltimore Orioles' Miguel Tejada reacts to his overthrow ball at first during the second inning Thursday in Los Angeles. The Dodgers' Jose Hernandez was safe at first and advanced to second on the throwing error. The Dodgers won 4-3.

Cardinals spend A's in ninth St. Louis completes series sweep with three-run rally

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — The Cardinals already had the National League's best record. They showed they can pull off a comeback victory, too.

Pinch-hitter Reggie Sanders capped a three-run rally with a game-winning single in the ninth inning, leading St. Louis to a surprising 5-4 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Thursday night.

It was the first time St. Louis came back from a ninth-inning deficit after being 0-for-24 in that situation.

"The early part of the year, we weren't able to win those late games," Sanders said. "Everything is clicking right now."

The Cardinals have won 13 of 17 and swept the A's, who came to St. Louis on an eight-game winning streak.

"Coming back like that against a good team like that is a good sign," Sanders said.

With Oakland leading 4-2, Edgar Renteria and Cody McKay opened the ninth with singles, and Ray Lankford was hit by a pitch to load the bases with no outs.

A's second baseman Marco Scutaro then booted Marlon Anderson's grounder to allow two runs to score.

Sanders followed with a single off Jim Meir (0-5) to complete the comeback for the Cardinals, who are 39-27 and hold a two-game lead in the NL Central.

"We have so many clutch players, so many guys that are ninth-inning guys, that it's the first time we've reversed it," manager Tony La Russa said. "We should do it as much as anybody because we've got a lot of pressure, clutch guys."

Ray King (1-0) got the last out in the ninth for the win.

Oakland's short-handed bullpen wasted a good effort by Tim Hudson, who allowed two runs on eight hits.

Baseball roundup

In other interleague games Thursday:

Royals 10, Braves 4: Darrell May (4-8) beat his former team, and Desi Relaford went 3-for-5 with three RBIs for Kansas City.

The Royals improved their AL worst record to 9-21 in their second victory in a row.

Mariners 6, Brewers 3: Scott Spiezo hit a tiebreaking homer leading off the eighth inning, sending Seattle to a victory in Milwaukee.

Jobert Cabrera homered and drove in three runs, and Randy Winn also connected for the Mariners.

Red Sox 11, Rockies 0: Derek Lowe pitched four-hit ball for seven innings in the 25th shutout in Coors Field history, and David Ortiz drove in a career-high five runs to help Boston avoid a sweep.

Lowe (6-5) allowed just two flyballs and struck out three for his third win in four starts.

Giants 5, Blue Jays 5: Michael Tucker hit a tiebreaking triple in the eighth, and the Giants completed a three-game home sweep. Justin Speier (1-4) took the loss.

Pirates 5, Angels 2: Tim Lincecum and Jack Wilson homered in the Pirates' go-ahead seventh, and Kris Benson (5-6) earned his first home win since May 10, 2003.

Jose Mesa worked the ninth for his 16th save in 16 chances.

Twins 6, Expos 4: Matthew LeCroy hit his third pinch-hit homer in three at-bats this season, and Minnesota rallied for a three-game sweep at Montreal.

Tim Lincecum's RBI double in the eighth put the Twins ahead to start, sending the Expos to their sixth consecutive loss.

Marlins 2, White Sox 1 (11): Pinch-hitter Matt Treanor singled home the winning run with two outs in the 11th, and Florida beat visiting Chicago after losing Josh Beckett to another injury.

The World Series MVP left his start in the fourth with his muscle strain on the side of his back. He's day to day.

Mets 6, Indians 2: Mike Cameron hit his first home since May 10, and five Mets pitchers combined on a five-hit shutout at Shea Stadium.

Diamondbacks 6, Yankees 3-4: Knucklebatter Steve Sparks (1-4) allowed one run in seven innings and Juan Brito hit his first major league homer for Arizona in Phoenix.

New York had a four-game winning streak snapped.

Dodgers 4, Orioles 3: Adrian Beltre snapped a tie with a homer in the eighth to lift the Dodgers to a three-game sweep at Chavez Ravine.

Beltre's 16th homer came two innings after pinch-hitter Jason Grubbski hit a tying two-run shot off Rodrigo Lopez (5-3).

Phillies 6, Tigers 2: Tigers' Phil Phillips (4-1): Jason Michaels homered and drove in four runs for the Phillies in the opener of a day-night doubleheader at Philadelphia.

In the nightcap, Carlos Guillen's two-out RBI single off Ryan Madison (4-2) in the 11th helped Detroit earn a split. The game was delayed 51 minutes by rain before the sixth inning, the fourth straight day weather affected the Phillies game.

Cubs 5, Astros 4: Glendon Rusch (4-1) pitched eight strong innings. Moises Alou drove in three runs and Chicago won its sixth straight in the only National League game of the day.

Chicago completed its first four-game sweep of the Astros since June 23-25, 1967, and first in Houston.

Messages of Support

★ Sgt. T. Thomas everyone is supporting you we love you and miss you. LOVE, Canice, Tarin, Ashlin and Tyler

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Features: Disrupts all GSM Cellular frequencies, 30 Meter operational range. Convertible from Belt Clip to Vehicle mount in matter of seconds. Windshield suction mount antenna for non-metallic vehicles. Metallic magnetic mount antenna for metallic vehicles and SUVs. Operates continuously when connected to vehicle battery power. Battery Pack allows 6 hours continuous operation during away from vehicle use. Battery Charger works on 5000 Hz, 110/240 VAC power. Internal Power systems are all switching supplies with near 90% efficiency to insure a constant power output as the battery voltage and current is depleted. RF output does not vary with battery discharge.

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Most home night for McGriff, Devil Rays

By BERNIE WILSON
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — After testing the depths of Petco Park in his first two at-bats, Fred McGriff uncoiled his smooth swing and sent his 493rd career home run sailing into — naturally — the home run porch down the right-field line.

McGriff pumped his fist as he rounded first base, having taken another step toward his goal of 500 homers and helping the Tampa Bay Devil Rays extend their franchise-record winning streak to eight games with a 4-1 win over the San Diego Padres on Thursday night.

"It felt good because it's been a lot of years," said McGriff, who tied Lou Gehrig for 21st on the career list. "Home runs are tough. This is a big yard. It's 411 in right-center, 402 in left-center. I found the spot."

McGriff hit his two-run homer just over the 322 sign, on a 1-0 changeup from Adam Eaton in the sixth inning. He fled out to left in his first at-bat and to center in his second.

"Freddie placed it right where it carries pretty good," Padres manager Bruce Bochy said. "I didn't think it was going out, but he hit it in the right spot and that really was the difference in the game."

McGriff has homered in 43 ballparks in 18 big league seasons. McGriff was brought up from the minors May 29, resuming his quest to become the 20th player to hit 500 homers. He hit 84 homers while with the Padres from 1991 until being traded to Atlanta on July 18, 1993.

"Right now, the goal is just to get to 500," McGriff said. "Not having played the first couple of months, it's a fight right now."

The Devil Rays are enjoying watching McGriff approach the milestone.

"It's a blessing to be here with him," winning pitcher Chad Gaudin said. "Every at-bat, it's like, 'O'mom, Freddy. We want him to get to his goal.'"

"He's had a heck of a career," manager Lou Piniella said.



Tampa Bay starter Chad Gaudin allowed one run in five innings to earn the win Thursday against the Padres in San Diego.

The Devil Rays also swept consecutive series for the first time in their seven-year history. Before starting this trip, they beat Colorado three straight in Tampa. The perennially woeful Devil Rays came into the series in fifth place in the AL East and jumped all the way to third.

Gaudin (1-1), who pinch-ran for McGriff in the first two games of the series, won in his fifth career start. He allowed one run and seven hits in five innings, struck out four and walked one.

Danys Baez pitched the ninth for his 13th save in 15 chances.

The Devil Rays had just five hits but the Padres, their offense still sputtering, were a superb effort by Eaton (3-7).

The right-hander allowed one earned run and two hits in six innings in San Diego's season-high fifth straight loss. The Padres have dropped from first in the NL West to third during the slump.

McGriff's homer gave Tampa Bay a 2-1 lead. Rocco Baldelli was aboard on a fielding error by rookie shortstop Khalil Greene, the Padres' third misadventure.

"That was just a horrible ballgame for us tonight," Bochy said. "Play like that and you're going to get beat."

Griffey's quest for 500th homer hits road following Reds' sweep

By JOE KAY
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — Junior is taking his quest for No. 500 back on the road, still aglow over three incredible days in his hometown.

Ken Griffey Jr. failed to get his milestone homer Thursday in front of another capacity crowd, but the Cincinnati Reds pulled off another late rally for a 4-3 victory and three-game sweep of the Texas Rangers.

Sean Casey had a pair of hits and a tiebreaking sacrifice fly in the seventh, a consolation prize for a raucous crowd that saw Griffey go 0-for-3 with a sacrifice fly.

The Reds then headed for St. Louis, where Griffey will resume his attempt to become the 20th player to reach the 500-homer mark.

The 34-year-old outfielder wanted badly to get it in his hometown, which gave him three days of unforgettable ovations.

"You always want to try to hit that home run," he said. "I just didn't do it this time. A lot of people will be watching in Cincinnati in the next week. I'll still be thinking about the response I've had the last three days."

He hadn't been so warmly received in his hometown since he arrived in a February 2000 trade with Seattle, and he made sure that fans knew how much he appreciated it.

When Griffey caught Eric Young's fly in centerfield to end the game, he pointed to fans in left field, then the ones in right, before running off the field.

"He was pressing at least twice today. The biggest reason was that he wanted to do it [in Cincinnati]."

Ken Griffey Sr.

"They've been real supportive through this whole thing," Griffey said. "It was just my way of saying thank you."

The crowd of 40,383 stood and screamed encouragement in each of his at-bats. A city that watched him grow up wanted to share one of his greatest moments.

Instead, he grounded out, flied out and had a routine sacrifice fly off right-hander Ryan Dese (3-4). Down to his last chance, he was way ahead on his final swing, striking out on a 76 mph pitch from left-hander Brian Shouse in the seventh.

Drese had to rely on his sinker because nothing else was working. He considered himself fortunate to get Griffey out.

"I threw him a cookie in his first at bat, and he hit a ground ball to second," Drese said. "I don't know if he didn't expect me to pitch him there or what."

Griffey's desire to reward the fans had a lot to do with it.

"To me, he looked like he was pressing at least twice today," said his father, Ken Griffey Sr.,

who was arranging to drive to St. Louis after the game. "The biggest reason was that he wanted to do it here, and he put a lot of unnecessary pressure on himself. I told him, 'You've got all year to hit that one home run.'"

Griffey was in a jovial mood before the game, joking about how travel-weary relatives were upset with him for prolonging the drama. He then went out and tried too hard to end it.

"He put a lot of pressure on himself," said closer Danny Graves, who pitched the ninth for his 27th save in 33 chances. "I think he was a little out of his game. Even though he didn't hit 500, he did what he had to do to win the game."

"I'll come. I'll come when people least expect it."

Junior's failure to hit one out was the Reds' only disappointment of a revving series. They returned home at 5 a.m. on Tuesday from an 0-7 road trip that knocked the Reds out of first in the NL Central.

The Rangers lost their fourth in a row, matching their season high, as the offense again relied solely on homers and the pitching staff failed to end. They hit six homers in the series, but batted only 201 overall.

"All we could do was hit home runs," manager Buck Showalter said. "It's not comfortable to feel like that's the way your offense has to develop every night."

All three games came down to late Reds rallies.

Ron-scoring singles by Ryan Freel and Barry Larkin tied it in the seventh, and Casey followed with his sacrifice fly off Shouse.

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Father's Day Messages

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White Sox deal Koch to Marlins

The Associated Press

MIAMI — The Florida Marlins acquired reliever Billy Koch from the Chicago White Sox for minor league infielder Wilson Valdez late Thursday night.

The deal was announced shortly after the Marlins beat the White Sox 2-1 in 12 innings.

The Marlins acquired Koch and cash from the White Sox, who had recently released the right-hander with Shingo Takatsu — Japan's career saves leader — as the team's closer.

"I was sort of expecting it a little bit, but I didn't think [Florida]," Koch said. "Through the grapevine, I hear things. I never hear the Marlins, but it'll be good. I like the heat, I like the sun."

Koch, 29, never quite fit in with the White Sox after joining them last season. He appeared in 24 games this season with eight saves in 11 opportunities and a 1-1 record — but had a 5.40 ERA.

Koch allowed 24 hits and 15 runs in 23 innings.

"That will be the best scenario for him," White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen said. "It's a shame it didn't work out for him here because he was a class act."

The Marlins were in need of bullpen help in the middle innings to complement a solid starting rotation and closer Armando Benitez.

Koch is 28-23 with 163 career saves in six major league seasons with Toronto, Oakland and Chicago.

Jones continues to take her case to public

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Marion Jones stepped up her public relations offensive by releasing results of a lie detector test her lawyer said proves she never took performance-enhancing drugs.

The move came just hours after she was accused of grandstanding by the international doping chief.

Jones and her legal team have sparred recently with IOC President Jacques Rogge, the United States Anti-Doping Agency and World Anti-Doping Agency chief Dick Pound in their attempt to clear the star sprinter of drug allegations.

The latest move by the five-time Olympic medalist involved taking a lie detector test Wednesday at her attorney's office and sending the results to the USAO on Thursday.

"The passing of the polygraph just vindicates and supports fully the position Marion has taken through all of this," Burton said on a conference call. "That's the position that she never, ever used performance-enhancing drugs at any time from anybody at all. This polygraph examination fully proves that."

USADA spokesman Rich Waininger said the agency would not comment on a specific case, but that "all credible information will receive the appropriate consideration."

Jones was asked two questions about performance-enhancing drugs by certified polygraph examiner Richard Homer, who determined she was telling the truth. Homer spent more than 20 years as a polygraph examiner for the FBI. Another examiner concurred after a blind analysis of the results.

The questions Jones was asked and answered "no" to were:

■ Did you ever personally use performance-enhancing drugs?

■ Are you now lying about any personal use of performance-enhancing drugs?

While the term "performance-enhancing drugs" was not defined, Burton said he took it to mean "anything that was illegal or improper."

Jones is one of the most prominent athletes who testified in a federal probe by a Bay Area drug lab accused of illegally distributing steroids.

USADA is investigating Jones for possible doping violations. She met with doping officials last month to discuss their evidence, and received a letter from the agen-



Olympic champion Marion Jones gestures during a news conference on Wednesday. Jones called for a public hearing in her campaign to forestall a possible drug case.

cy last week asking follow-up questions. USADA is building cases based on documents and other circumstantial evidence deriving from the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative case. Athletes can be banned without a positive drug test.

Earlier Thursday, Pound said Jones' call for a public hearing was a "grandstand performance," and he accused her of trying to avoid proper anti-doping hearing procedures.

"I don't think that an athlete for whatever reason is able to subvert that process," Pound said in a conference call from Montreal. "I think it is very unfortunate that Marion was advised to use words like secret court with respect to USADA."

Hantuchova, Kuznetsova reach Eastbourne final

EASTBOURNE, England — Daniela Hantuchova rallied to upset top-seeded Amelie Mauresmo 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 Friday to reach the final of the Eastbourne grass-court tournament.

The unseeded Slovak broke for the match with a forehand pass to make her first final since October 2002.

Hantuchova will meet second-seeded Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia on Saturday. She beat fourth-seeded Vera Zvonareva 3-6, 7-6 (2), 6-1 in the other semifinal.

"I can't tell you how much I was looking forward and waiting to feel like this," said Hantuchova, who went into a slump last year after breaking into the top 10. "I'm so happy to feel like it's all back. I think today I proved it, and I was really enjoying myself out there."

Rahman knocks out Calloway

GLEN BURNIE, Md. — Former heavyweight champion Hasim Rahman knocked out Rob Calloway in the second round Thursday night, enhancing his bid to regain the title he lost nearly three years ago. It was the third victory in a 99-day span for Rahman (38-5-1), the top-ranked contender in the World Boxing Association.

Rahman felled Calloway (44-5-1) on an overhand right, and the underdog didn't get off the canvas until several moments after the 10-count by referee Malik Waleed.

The official time was two minutes of the second round.

Before his three-match winning streak, Rahman went 0-3-1 after winning the heavyweight title with a stunning knockout of Lennox Lewis in April 2001.

Rahman lost the rematch seven months later, then fell out of contention before his recent resurgence.

V. Williams, Navratilova will play against Austria

VIENNA, Austria — Venus Williams and Martina Navratilova will play for the United States against Austria in their second round FedCup clash in July, Austrian officials said Friday.

"The International Tennis Federation has signaled that Williams and Navratilova will definitely come to Innsbruck," Martin Reiter, manager of the Austrian Tennis Association, told The Associated Press.

The Austrians faced the Americans on July 10-11 as Barbara Schwartz, Barbara Schett and Patricia Wartusch. The American team has yet to announce its second singles player alongside Williams.

Emmitt Smith named starter again

TEMPE, Ariz. — Emmitt Smith, the NFL's all-time leading rusher, was designated Thursday as the Arizona Cardinals starting running back.

Coach Dennis Green made the announcement at the close of offseason workouts. Marcel Smith, who took over last season after Smith broke his shoulder, will be the

backup.

When Smith returned after missing six games, he remained the backup.

The 35-year-old Smith signed a two-year deal with the Cardinals last year after a 13 years with the Dallas Cowboys.

Last season was his worst in the NFL, with just 256 yards rushing and an average 2.8 yards a carry. Ship rushed for 830 yards and a 3.6 average.

Rams' Little indicted on felony drunken-driving charge

ST. LOUIS — Rams defensive end Leonard Little was indicted on charges of perjury drunken driving, nearly two months after police in a St. Louis suburb arrested him.

Little pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter in an alcohol-related wreck that killed a St. Louis woman in 1998. The latest indictment mirrors charges in a criminal complaint filed against him April 26.

Little was indicted Wednesday on charges of speeding, and as a persistent offender with felony driving while intoxicated. His lawyer, Scott Rosenblum, said Little would plead innocent.

Little was arrested on April 24 after police pulled him over for speeding on an interstate. Police said he had bloodshot eyes, smelled of alcohol, failed three roadside sobriety tests and admitted drinking alcohol.

The charge of driving while intoxicated normally is a misdemeanor. If convicted of the felony, Little could face up to four years in prison.

Vikings cut cornerback Kelly

EDEEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — Cornerback Eric Kelly was released by the Minnesota Vikings on Friday after failing to report for the final week of offseason workouts and asking for his release.

Kelly, who started 11 games as a rookie in 2001 and 12 games in 2002, was expected to be Minnesota's fourth cornerback.

Patriots extend Bruschi

FOXBORO, Mass. — The New England Patriots have signed linebacker Tedy Bruschi to a contract extension through 2007.

Bruschi, who acts as his own agent, was scheduled to become a free agent after the 2004 season. The new deal includes a total base salary of \$4.6 million over the next four years, according to the web site of the NFL Players Association.

Bruschi's signing bonus was not disclosed. Patriots spokesman Stacey James said Thursday the team does not comment on contract extensions.

SEC teams are halfway home at College World Series

By ERIC OLSON

The Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — For the second time, four Southeastern Conference teams are among the final eight vying for the national championship at the College World Series.

Louisiana State, Georgia, South Carolina and Arkansas all will be at Rosenblatt Stadium, where the tournament opens with first-round games Friday and Saturday.

"I thought when I walked in here that we were in Birmingham at the Southeastern Conference tournament," Arizona coach Andy Lopez said Thursday.

In Friday's games, Arizona (35-25-1) plays Georgia (43-21)

and Arkansas (45-22) meets top-ranked Texas (55-13).

Saturday, Cal State Fullerton (42-21) faces South Carolina (50-15) and Louisiana State (46-17) meets Miami (49-11).

No conference has had as many teams in a single CWS as the SEC.

Four SEC teams — LSU, Alabama, Auburn and Mississippi State — made the field in 1997.

Nine of the 12 SEC teams made the 64-team national tournament this year.

"It's a conference that has administrators who care about baseball and resources are provided, and they try to put you in the best situation to win," South Carolina coach Ray Tanner said.

Lopez, in his third year at Arizona

after coaching Florida the previous seven, said college baseball is good in the SEC, Southwest and Southeast.

But there is something special about the SEC, he said. Every weekend conference series is a big event in modern stadiums with big crowds, he said.

"That's what really is missing on the West Coast," Lopez said. "It's an electric conference. It inspires young guys to even better than they can at times. I've lived it for seven years. There is no margin for error, no mercy, no grace."

Arizona is back at the CWS for the first time since winning the national title in 1986. Lopez is one of three coaches to take three different schools to the series. He

brought Pepperdine in 1992 and Florida in 1996 and '98.

Georgia is in the CWS for the second time since 2001. Bulldogs coach David Perry played on the 1990 Georgia team that won the national title.

Arkansas, picked before the season to finish last in the SEC West, reached the final eight for the first time since 1989. They are coached by Dave Van Horn, who guided Nebraska to the CWS in 2001 and '02.

Texas is in the CWS for a record 31st time and for the fourth time in five years.

Cal State Fullerton, which brings in a CWS-leading 385 batting average, made it back to Omaha for the fourth time since 1999 after getting off to a 15-16 start.

"The '04 version is one of the greatest comeback seasons in Cal State Fullerton history," Titans coach George Horton said.

South Carolina has beaten 10 straight opponents in winning the SEC tournament title, its regional and its super regional against East Carolina.

LSU is back in Omaha for the 13th time in 19 years. But this will be the Tigers' first meeting with Miami since Warren Morris hit his bottom-of-the-ninth homer to beat the Hurricanes 9-8 in the 1996 national championship game.

"That was the biggest nightmare of my life as a coach in the last inning," Miami coach Jim Morris said. "I really want to beat LSU."

Future (with DEI) is now for Waltrip

BY BILL WHITEHEAD

Scripts Howard News Service

This week Michael Waltrip declined to comment about his accident with Rusty Wallace last week at Pocono, in which Wallace said he lost his brakes, wrecking both drivers.

Waltrip, though, might be talking soon.

Commentary

In the past two weeks, in races at Dover and Pocono, he's found himself the center of attention as speculation surfaced about his future with Dale Earnhardt Inc. The source of these rumors was none other than teammate Dale Jr.

"Michael would probably want to finish his career at DEI, but the chances of that happening I wouldn't say are 100 percent right now," Earnhardt said at Dover two weeks ago. "He's going to have to run good. To bring Michael back next year, there needs to be some convincing there, you know?"

After the first five races of 2004, the 41-year-old Waltrip had done little convincing. His Chevrolet has crashed out of three races, putting him way down in the driver standings and behind the proverbial eight ball. He rebounded nicely with four top-10 finishes and an outstanding second-place effort at Charlotte.

"I am really proud of the commitment and perseverance of the team," Waltrip said of his sixth-place finish after starting from the rear of the field due to a wreck in qualifying. "I am pleased with what we are doing and what we'll do in the next few weeks."

Then came the next week — last week — and his run-in with Wallace.

Waltrip, whose future at DEI is apparently hanging in the balance, should be able to do a little convincing in the next three weeks. He posted his fifth and seventh-place finishes at Pocono in 2003 and will have to put in his time next week at Sears

Point, where he ran a solid 13th a year ago.

Then there's this place called Daytona he'll be visiting. Waltrip, a two-time Daytona 500 winner and a Pepsi 400 winner two years ago, no doubt will be thrilled when he pulls onto International Speedway Boulevard and will probably race his way down ISB to get to "The World Center of Racing." He and Earnhardt will be co-favorites in the summer shootout two weeks from Saturday.

A certain amount of uncertainty exists at DEI these days. John Andretti does much of the organization's testing and is trying to secure full-time sponsorship in the No. 1 car, which has two top 20 finishes in its three starts this year, including a 13th at Daytona in February. And the group has plans of expanding perhaps to a five-team operation in 2005, with three Cup teams and two Busch teams.

But it's Waltrip at the center of the speculation — not Andretti's sponsorship search, not Martin Truex's development, not the team's Busch future. Last week, Richie Gilmore, DEI's director of motorsports racing, gave Waltrip the dreaded vote of confidence, which in many sports is interchangeable with the term "kiss of death."

Said Gilmore: "Michael's in the 15 car through 2005. Right now, if Michael performs at the level that we need him to — and that's top 10 — he can have that ride for five years. He has nothing to worry about if he can perform in the top 10."

Forget about Waltrip's recent good runs in the top 10 and that second at Charlotte — he needs to win a race here soon. Somewhere, anywhere, especially Daytona, where he has high expectations and definitely knows the way to Victory Lane. That will silence everyone who says his job is on the line.

And I'm pretty sure Waltrip will start talking to everyone then.

Bill Whitehead covers NASCAR for Scripts Treasure Coast Publishing. He can be contacted at bill@hbjr.com.



Rusty Wallace's car, bottom, skids across the track after knocking Michael Waltrip's car into the wall on the second turn during last Sunday's NASCAR Pocono 500 at the Pocono Raceway. Wallace said he hopes the series' move to Michigan will end the string of misfortune that has plagued NASCAR the past two weeks.

Patience, please!

Drivers hope Michigan signals end to 'weird' doings

BY MIKE HARRIS

The Associated Press

BROOKLYN, Mich. — Tony Stewart, of all people, called for patience in the wake of chaotic races at Dover and Pocono.

Most of the problems grew out of the changing rules governing freezing the field when the caution flag flies and when the pit lane will be open to the competitors.

"In NASCAR's defense, the first time we were told to drivers about freezing the field, they said it would be a work in progress," said Stewart, perhaps NASCAR's most impatient driver.

"As frustrating as it's been for everybody, I think we have to be realistic about making rule changes."

"This wasn't just whacking a quarter-inch off a spoiler or changing the size of a restrictor plate. It was a pretty drastic change. And any time you change a rule like that you're going to run into a situation that somebody didn't think of, because there's only so many different scenarios you can think of."

Former series champion Rusty Wallace said he hopes racing Sun-

day at Michigan International Speedway will have a calming effect on the situation.

"I really think things will calm down a whole lot this week at Michigan and I'll be totally shocked if they don't," said Wallace, the leader among active drivers with five victories and 15 top-five finishes at MIS. "The last two weeks have produced enough weirdness, controversy and torn-up race cars for a quarter of a season, let alone just the two races."

"I'll tell you, it must be a situation where the moon is aligned with some of the evil stars or something weird like that. Man, with all the crashes, controversial calls and unusual stuff going on, you just wonder what could happen next."

Wallace himself has some misadventures over the past two weeks.

At Dover, he was able to avoid serious damage in the crashes but a stop-and-go penalty late in the race relegated him to 13th when he appeared headed for a top five finish.

At Pocono, he had a brake failure and crashed hard into Michael Waltrip, finishing 32nd.

"I can't believe that happened and I hate it for him and us," Wallace said. "We've had some brake problems in the past at places like Watkins Glen and at Martinsville, but never at Pocono. It just shows you how weird things have gotten."

Wallace figures, though, that Michigan's wide, high-banked track should be the cure for what has been ailing the Nextel Cup series.

"Michigan has always been a pretty calm place, with all the excitement centered around fuel mileage, pit strategy and track position," Wallace said. "It's just not a place where all the crazy stuff happens."

In the 10 races run at MIS beginning with Dale Jarrett's victory in a caution-free event in 1999, only 269 of 1,956 laps have been run under yellow.

Most races on the big track lend themselves more to fuel economy runs than fender-rubbing skirmishes.

Whatever the rules, though, Stewart said he and the other drivers just have to work with NASCAR.

"My job is to take the rules they give us and try to win races with them," he said.

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SPORTS

Lefty right in the thick of it

Mickelson's 4-under shows he's ready for second major

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

SOUTHAMPTON, N.Y. — Phil Mickelson had to wait a long time for that first major. He's playing like he wants to get No. 2 right away.

The Masters champion surged to the top of the leader board at the U.S. Open on Friday, shooting a 4-under-par 66 that pushed him two strokes ahead of first-round leaders Jay Haas and Shigeki Maruyama.

"I'm swinging with confidence, knowing where the ball is going to go and taking half the trouble out of play, which makes the golf course a lot easier," said Mickelson, who has only one bogey in 36 holes at the toughest test in golf.

And here's a potential omen: Lefty made his first serious run at a major in 1995, tying for fourth in the Open when it was last held at Shinnecock Hills. His chances were ruined on the par-5 16th, which he played at 6-over for the week.

This time, he's 1-under there through the first two rounds, blasting out of the sand to 3 feet for his final birdie Friday.

"There's a lot of hard shots out there," playing partner Kirk Triplett said, "and he hit a lot of good shots."

Mickelson was locked in, missing only three greens and three fairways, a remarkable achievement considering the difficulty of the set-up.

It helped that the feared ocean breezes didn't materialize for the second day in a row, making it a little easier to find the fairway and keep it on the green. Bright sunshine and thick, muggy air prevailed.

Leader board

Clubhouse
leaders midway
through the
second round of
the U.S. Open
at Shinnecock
Hills Golf Club,
Southampton,
N.Y.:

Phil Mickelson	134
Fred Funk	136
Retief Goosen	138
Corey Pavin	138
Vijay Singh	138
Mike Weir	139
Pat Perez	140
Stephen Ames	140
Kirk Triplett	141
Tim Herron	141

Mickelson was 0-for-42 as a pro in golf's biggest events, earning the much-hated moniker "Best Player Never to Win a Major." He finally broke through at the Masters two months ago — shooting 31 on the back nine Sunday and sinking an 18-foot birdie putt on the final hole to beat Ernie Els by a stroke.

If Mickelson keeps playing like this at Shinnecock Hills, he'll be halfway to a Grand Slam. He's certainly changed his "Phil the Thrill" mentality, which he demonstrated at 13 and 14 by using irons off the tee.

Mickelson also pointed to his routine before the tournament. He spent three days at Shinnecock Hills last week, practicing and getting familiar with the links-style course.

SEE LEFTY ON PAGE 29



Phil Mickelson reacts to a birdie putt on the eighth hole during the second round of the U.S. Open Friday at Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y. Mickelson shot a 4-under 66.

Sanders helps Cardinals rally past A's with ninth-inning single

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Pistons' Ben Wallace, Hamilton receive invitations to play for U.S. in Athens

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Drivers hope Michigan solves NASCAR's recent trouble with rules

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